University of Alberta

Situating East Asians in Canadian Race Discourse

by

Hijin Park

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Abstract

This study addresses the relationship between race and ethnicity, individual and social identities, and minority and majority cultures. Using ethnographic tools, the study delineates how race impacts the lives of Canadians of East Asian heritage, that is Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean, who were born in and/or grew up in Canada from an early age. Emphasis is placed on how the participants internalized representations of East Asians in order to construct their individual and social identities.

The positioning of East Asians, in contemporary Canadian society, will be discussed by analyzing the ways in which the "model minority" and the "yellow peril" stereotypes are (re)constructed in order to maintain unequal race relations. The study attempts to glean some of the issues associated with dealing with difference in multicultural/multiracial societies.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Various terms represent the contemporary discourse on difference such as the politics of difference (Young, 1990; McLaren, 1992; and West, 1990), the politics of recognition (Taylor, 1994), the politics of multiculturalism (Paquet, 1994 and Shohat and Stam, 1994), the politics of representation (Alcoff, 1991 and Spivak, 1988), and the politics of identity (Matustik, 1995 and Mercer, 1992). All of the above terms refer to similar efforts to engage the present concerns of delineating how difference, as a socially meaningful category, is dictated, negotiated, fought over and represented. These issues will be delved into mainly from the interdisciplinary perspective of Cultural Studies. Although there are no universalisms which apply to Cultural Studies (see Davies, 1995), numerous works falling under the rubric of Cultural Studies attempt to problematize and politicize notions of difference, identity and representation (hooks, 1990; Gilroy, 1987; Chow, 1993; Hall, 1993, 1991a, 1991b; Appiah, 1994; Mercer, 1990; and others).

This study focuses specifically on the difference of race. In the thesis, I will discuss, through ethnographic interviews, how race impacts the lives of young Canadians of East Asian heritage who were born in or immigrated to Canada at an early age.[1] The question to answer is, "How does one's visibility as an East Asian affect one's self identity?" I will attempt to explore the relationship between personal and social identities. In so doing, the research combines my experiences with those of others of similar visibility. Thus, the research is what Van Maanen, as cited by Horton

[1] Of the participants in this study who were not born in Canada, the participants immigrated to Canada before the age of five.

(1995) defines as a "critical tale". A critical tale discusses the relationship between the researcher and the participants.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND BIAS' OF THE RESEARCHER

Imbedded into the research are two central ideas: a) a distinction can be made between discourse on ethnicity and discourse on race; and b) race is a meaningful category. These ideas arose mainly from personal experiences and observations. I believe that it is my socially visible body which dictates my social reality more than my assumed cultural differences as a Korean-Canadian (as defined by multicultural policy).

I have often asked the research question (in various forms) to myself. I believe that my "race" has affected the way I see myself, others and society, and my relationship with myself, others and society. I am continually trying to figure out what kind of difference race is and what difference race makes and in what contexts. In this process, I have come to some conclusions (as evidenced in Chapter two); however, these conclusions are temporary and incomplete. Throughout the study I attempt to address some of the issues involved in being a member of the group I wish to describe. I aimed to address how race has shaped my sense of self as well as explicate how the study has altered or added to my perceptions of race and identity.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study lies in its orientation towards addressing the relationship between ethnicity and race, the dominant society and minority societies and between personal and social identities. We all come to understand ourselves and others in relation to something; however, the differential power in these relationships are not often included. For groups defined as "ethnic" the delineation of their experiences tends to ignore issues of race or set it off in the sidelines. Social science research on ethnic groups in Canada has generally focused on ethnic cultural retention

and loss (see Reitz, 1980 and Breton, Reitz, and Valentine, 1980). Likewise much of the literature on East Asians in Canada focuses on issues of cultural retention, economic and social integration, cultural discontinuity between the home and society (or school) and acculturative stress (see Ujimoto and Naidoo, 1984, 1986, and 1987 and 1988). In the field of education these issues (whether they be from a macrostructural perspective (see Ogbu, 1987) or from a microstructural perspective (see Tharp, 1989 and Jacobs, 1989)) have generally been dealt with in relation to academic performance and achievement. The emphasis in these works lies on the minority groups or more specifically on the minority "culture". The dominant society is not implicated. Furthermore, most work also focuses on specific ethnic communities and ethnic relations. Work which does address East Asians as a group still focuses on their "culture" (see Vernon, 1984). Recent works in education, politics and economics also are based on the economic and political rise of the Pacific Rim countries (see Wilson, Grossman and Kennedy, 1990 and Ng, 1996). In addition, Canada has designated 1997 as Canada's Year of Asia Pacific (CYAP). These forays are primarily centered around foreign trade and international relations. Rather than facilitating further understanding regarding the unique experiences of East Asians in Canada, they rely on and serve to solidify the East Asian/Canadian dichotomy.

The significance of this study is in its positioning of East Asians as a racial category. Brah (1992) notes that:

> Processes of racialization are, of course, historically specific and different groups have been racialized differently under varying circumstances, and on the basis of different signifiers of 'difference'. Each racism has a particular history. It arose from a particular set of economic, political and cultural circumstances, has been reproduced through specific mechanisms, and has found different expression in different societies (p. 133).

However, very little work has been done on the racialization of East Asians in Canada. Hence I relied heavily on the work done on the Asian American[2] experiences of marginalization. The study of the ways East Asians have been positioned in Canadian race discourse is essential to get a more complete picture of race relations in Canada.[3] The experience of being East Asian in Canada adds to an understanding of what it means to be Canadian. This study speaks to current times of increasing globalization where notions of identity, home, and belonging are not as clear as they may have been before.

DEFINING CATEGORIES

I give meaning to terms such as "race", "visible minorities", "white" and "East Asian"[4] since these terms have social, political, economic, and historical meaning. However, it is not to insinuate the unity of these categories nor that they are fixed. Rather, it recognizes that these labels confer experiences, shape individual and social knowledge and structure social relations. Okihiro (1995) states that:

> ...privileges (and wants) are accorded by the positions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and place. We know that white men are affirmatively admitted by virtue of their raced and gendered position, and we recognize that within the binarism of heterosexual-homosexual, the former is assumed, centered, and rendered natural and universal. Certain sites, thus, confer privileges. But we also know that privilege is gained through subjugation and exploitation, creating the ranks of the subjugated, the exploited, the subaltern (p. 3).

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[2] Contrary to most authors who use the term "Asian American" to refer to Americans of Asian descent (Okihiro, 1994; Tajima, 1996; Kim, 1992), King-Kok Cheung (1993) uses the term to refer to "North American writers of Asian descent" stating that: "Asians in the United States and Canada have had parallel experiences (p. xv)."

[3] Omi and Takagi (1996) discuss how the work of Tomás Almaguer (who strayed away from the dominant Black-white American race theorizing to incorporate Native Americans, Mexicans, Chinese and Japanese), "...draws attention to how the Asian American historical experience is essential to a full comprehension of racial dynamics in the West (p. 155)."

[4] In this study, I distinguish between East Asian and South East Asian. East Asian in this study incorporates Koreans, Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese. Left out of the category are Filipino, Laotian, Cambodian and Hmong.

In naming and working with these categories, I attempt to problematize these categories. The category East Asian has served to homogenize (thus silence) a heterogeneous group. I attempt to address both the salience of the category East Asian in terms of affecting life experience and identity as well as how East Asian has been socially constructed for specific purposes.

"East Asian"

Prior to the data collection process I asked myself "Who or what is an East-Asian Canadian?" and "What is the significance of "East Asian""?[5] I knew that for me it was primarily a social identity which seemed to stand apart from me but had everything to do with me. But what was it composed of? It seems that the category of East Asian, in the Canadian context, has changed throughout history. Prior to the 1970's East Asian generally encompassed Chinese and Japanese persons. Throughout Canadian history stereotypes of "chinamens" and "japs" bent on destroying white Canada abound in varying degrees of intensity. Koreans began to arrive in Canada in the mid 1960s due to the less restrictive immigration laws (Kim and Berry, 1985 and Lehmann and Lee, 1986). The image of the hardworking self-employed immigrant was reinforced and slightly altered. In the past two and a half decades many Vietnamese have immigrated to Canada (see Underleider, 1996). Thus, the image of the immigrants/refugees coming over in boats was reinforced. The term "Fresh Off the Boat" or F.O.B. had a distinct meaning separate from the image of Chinese and Japanese arriving in boats since Europeans were no longer doing so. The idea of East Asians as morally corrupt, violent hooligans (prominent in Canadian history) again arose and was slightly altered to include "Asian gangs" engaged in criminal activity, as well as Asians in gangs or hordes. In the 1990's it is the rich "ruthless" Hong Kong immigrants who have garnered attention (see North, 1996). Many Korean immigrants are also richer relative to the middle to lower class immigrants that arrived in the

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[5] For a discussion on what is an Asian American see Tajima (1996).

1970's. Thus, it is recognized that the category of "East Asian" is constantly changing.[6]

I also want to emphasize from the onset that cultural differences do exist between Koreans, Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese (like between Germans, Scottish, French and English). However, the focus of this study is race and hence I will not be adequately addressing these differences nor do I attempt to do so. However, I can state that in my experience, Koreans (in Canada as well as in Korea) generally see themselves as being unique and separate from other East Asian nations. They do not generally associate with a pan-ethnic/national identity but as Korean or Korean-Canadian. The cultural, political, economic and historical differences between Korea and other East Asian nations are great. In addition, the relationship between Korea and China and Japan has often been one of protectorate and protector, oppressed and oppressor, of ally and enemy. As a nation repeatedly invaded by surrounding countries, the Korean psyche would find it unthinkable to define itself as the same as Chinese or Japanese. However, the context of this study is Canadian society therefore, in this context the category East Asian does have merit.

Racism

I define racism according to Henry's (1994) guidelines in her book, *The Caribbean Diaspora in Toronto: Learning to Live with Racism.* Henry states that racism encompasses four components: a) individual racism (attitudinal, everyday); b) institutional; c) systemic; and d) cultural/ideological. Within these four components

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[6] Unique images do exist for certain cultural groups. For example, the Japanese are associated with W.W.II, sushi, cars and conformity; the Chinese are associated with alternative medicine, Tiananmen Massacre, fast food and massive population and Vietnamese are associated with the Vietnam War, refugees and Asian gangs. However, Kim (1982) argues that the representations of Chinese have been generalized to depict all persons of East Asian background since Westerners have generally been unable to differentiate between disparate East Asian groups (p. 4). It will be argued that each of these representations affect all East Asians, regardless of ethnic heritage, due to race.

a distinction can be made as to whether the racism is overt or covert. I will give a brief definition of each according to Henry's descriptions (pp. 23-25).

a) individual and everyday racism: Individual racism refers to individual attitudes and beliefs which deem that the values, norms and customs of one's own racial group is superior to that of other racial groups. Everyday racism refers to the day to day, generally subtle practices such as gestures, looks and forms of speech used by the dominant white group to impress an inferiority onto a non-white group. The perpetrators of everyday racism are sometimes unaware of these behaviors. People who experience everyday racism also may not be aware of it due to its subtlety.

b) institutional racism: Institutional racism is exhibited in policies, practices, procedures and processes of institutions. Institutional racism may directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, encourage, support or solidify differential privilege based on race.

c) systemic racism: Systemic racism is akin to institutional racism but concerns laws, codes and norms in social systems which produce unequal distribution of economic, political and social resources and rewards.

d) cultural/ideological racism: Cultural/ideological racism refers to the ideologies of a society which are imbedded in language, religion, art and literature. The collective ideologies of the dominant culture are seen as right and commonsensical. Other cultures are judged and inferiorized according to the standards of the dominant culture. Cultural racism leads to the justification of discriminatory actions and beliefs.

All four components need not be present to define an event or individual as racist but in analyzing racism, it is clear that they influence and support unequal race relations.

CONCLUSION/OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS

I have given a brief summary of the issues I will attempt to address in this research. In the following chapter I outline some of the theoretical principles on race and difference. I attempt to discuss race in the Canadian context in general as well as the forms of racism specific to East Asians. Thereafter I discuss the methodology and methods used in the research. My presence as a participant observer will be highlighted. Chapter four presents the participants and my interpretations of some of their experiences. The conclusion synthesizes the previous chapters focusing on key findings and reflections.

CHAPTER TWO

Conceptual Framework: East Asians in Canadian Race Discourse

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the general patterns of racial subordination of visible minorities in Canada as well as the specific ways in which East Asians are racialized (see Omi and Takagi, 1996; Chang, 1993; Kim, 1982; and Razack, 1995). The relationship between race and the body and culture; the predominance yet invisibility of "whiteness"; the white racial hierarchy; and the exclusionary practices involved in the construction of Canadian nationality intersect and form a unique system of racial domination and subordination of East Asians. The representation of East Asians in Canadian society is examined by looking at the contemporary usage of the "model minority"[7] and the "yellow peril" stereotypes. I will show that East Asians are constructed and reconstructed as homogenous and different in order to mask and preserve current power structures of racial inequality. The construction of difference, its meaning, purpose and how it is used will be highlighted by a discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of multicultural ideology.

ETHNICISM AND CONTEMPORARY RACE DISCOURSE

An analysis of contemporary race discourse in Canada necessitates the discussion of ethnicity and cultural difference theories since, as stated by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992): "The notion of cultural difference has largely displaced the notion of biological difference, as a basis for excluding or inferiorizing, both in discourse and

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[7] Chun (1995) contends that the term "model minority" first came into print in the United States in the 1960's during the civil rights movement. Americans were groping with issues of racial inequality particularly Black/white inequality. The idea of an ethnic minority's success due to individual hard work supported by community affiliation and cultural attributes appealed to the dominant society. The model minority since it's inception has been used to maintain the white racial hierarchy (as will be discussed later in this chapter). The term "model minority" is primarily used in the American context. However, it is also used to refer to the ways in which South and East Asians are represented within Canadian society (Razack, 1995).

practice (p. 14)." Relations of hegemony are no longer authorized, legitimated and perpetuated by a belief in the inherent biological inferiority of minority groups, rather it has been replaced by more subtle forms of racism based on cultural essentialism (see Trinh, 1989, chapter 3).[8] Brah (1992) terms this global turn from biological racism to culturalized racism as "ethnicism". Ethnicism:

> ...defines the experience of racialized groups primarily in 'culturalist' terms: that is, it posits 'ethnic difference' as the primary modality around which social life is constituted and experienced. Cultural needs are defined largely as independent of other social experiences centered around class, gender, racism or sexuality. That means that a group identified as culturally different is assumed to be internally homogenous,... (p. 129).

Ethnicism places the emphasis on the persons categorized as having culture and leaves systemic inequality/racism and relations of power untouched. Razack (1995) affirms that culture explains both the success and failure of Asians. Success is due to a group's admirable cultural characteristics and failure is rooted in the group's inferior cultural characteristics. Failure and success is often rooted in a group's inability and/or reluctance to integrate which is rooted in their culture (p. 70).

Therefore, visible minorities, although racialized due to their racial visibility are defined as different in public discourse due to their distinct ethnic cultures. The relegation of race under the category culture serves to cast doubt on the salience of race and the significance of racism. Frankenberg (1993) defines the tendency to avoid issues of race and racism as "color evasiveness". She asserts that:

> What becomes clearer about color evasiveness, then, is that more than evading questions of difference wholesale, this discursive repertoire

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[8] Theories based on the biological inferiority of minority groups are presently deemed unacceptable. However, arguments espousing the biological inferiority of minority groups still are present, particularly for certain groups such as Blacks (that is a general belief in Blacks as primitive beasts which would entail an inferior intelligence, biologically prone to aggression and uncontrollable sexual urges). East Asians as well are biologically inferiorized relative to white due to their slighter build and believed tendencies towards aggression. Biological racism and culturalized racism reinforce each other; however, discourse on race and racism is primarily perpetuated and justified in contemporary Canadian society through culturalized racism.

> selectively engages difference, evading questions of power. While certain kinds of difference or differentiation can be seen and discussed with abandon, others are evaded if at all possible (p. 152).

Group differences are legitimated in Canadian society; however, the dominant society dictates who is different, the meanings of difference, which differences are engaged and how differences are engaged. Collective identities based on race, sexuality, gender, and disability are discussed but these discussions place the importance and salience of these categories into doubt. Harris (1994) affirms that:

> "Race" is real, and pervasive: our very perceptions of the world...are filtered through a screen of "race." And because the meaning of "race" is neither unitary or fixed, while some groups use notions of "race" to further the subordination of people of color, other groups use "race" as a tool of resistance (p. 741).

Since racial categories and the meanings attached to them are socially constructed, one needs to simultaneously deny the validity of these oppressive categories as well as affirm the pervasive functioning of these categories in everyday life (see hooks, 1992 and Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992).

Political discourse, from the Left to the Right, argue for a colourblind society as the end goal.[9] However, Right political discourse argues that policies which differentiate based on race (for example affirmative action) are endemically racist and divisive. The Right advocates a society based on individual merit (see D'Souza, 1995 and Reform Party of Canada, 1996)[10]. Left political discourse, on the other hand, argues

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[9] Both Right and Left political discourse aim for a colourblind society since Western society is based on humanism. Young (1995) recognizes that:

> 'The same but different' was the trope of humanist universalism, of humankind as a universal egalitarian category made up of individuals, and in fact, despite today's customary gestures of derision, we still hang on to this humanist, universalizing equation: the whole ethic of sexual and racial equality rests upon it: difference which must be acknowledged, but also sameness which must be conceded (p. 92).

[10] Right political discourse strategically uses race to conceal the issue of race. For example, the Reform Party of Canada (1996) argues that to differentiate among different groups in Canada based on race, gender and "other characteristics" leads to an intolerant and unequal society. The Party goes on to state: "The Reform Party believes that discrimination - which in the human rights context is widely accepted to mean differentiation based on irrelevant or unreasonable criteria - harms individuals and must be

that failing to address the realities of living within a racialized society is itself racist and serve to perpetuate current power structures of racial inequality (see hooks, 1992; Brah, 1992; Frankenberg, 1993 and Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992).[11] Denouncing the viability of the category race is beneficial in the sense that it serves to critique the foundations of biological racism (Frankenberg, 1993). However, since race functions to differentiate and dominate over certain groups who are defined as possessing race, racism will not be eradicated simply by avoiding the terms and issues surrounding race and racism, or by not seeing and acknowledging colour difference (see Juteau-Lee, 1995, p. 19).[12]

In addition, dominant discourse generally sees racism as past injustices which have been acknowledged (for example Japanese internment during W.W.II) and/or as presently perpetuated by morally inept, physically violent, extremist, ill-educated individuals (for example the Aryan Nations). Racism is not placed as a marker of structural violence deeply imbedded in society and in individuals. This allows Canadians, regardless of racial background, to think that there is very little racism, to associate racism with acts of the past or as present acts and thoughts of the extreme right and to disassociate themselves from the perpetuation and validation of racism.[13]

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discouraged, and, where appropriate, restrained by the laws of society (p. 19)." Thus the invalidity of the category race as a differentiating characteristic is being used to evade issues of white hegemony and race privilege. In addition the Reform Party confuses formal equality and social equality and fails to acknowledge that formal equality under the law does not necessarily correspond to social equality (see Young, 1990, chapter 6).

[11] To make this dichotomy between Right and Left political discourse does not mean that elements of both do not exist within an individuals or groups arguments regarding race (see Kennedy, May, 1997, Bissoondath, 1994 and Winant, 1995). In addition, I am not arguing that either holds the answers to dealing with issues of race. Omi and Takagi (1996) discuss how both Right and Left political discourse renders East Asians invisible (pp. 157-158).

[12] Frankenberg (1993) informs that a part of dominant discourse regarding race is to not recognize people's race. She states, "...the idea that noticing a person's "color" is not a good thing to do, even an offensive thing to do, suggests that "color," which here means nonwhiteness, is bad in and of itself (p. 145)."

[13] Frankenberg (1993) in her study of the racialization of white women notes that the women would distance themselves from racism by associating racism with the past. She notes that:

> ...neither the Klan image nor that of colonialism...provided the women with a sense of the everyday structuring to their lives by racism. Taking the Klan as paradigmatic places racism at the extreme edge of the category of individual, voluntaristic actions that...characterize "racism" or

Racism is associated with "bad" and when this happens it is difficult to examine the structural normalization of racist beliefs and acts. Unless this is recognized, the onus of responsibility and the blame for racism will continue to be placed on persons categorized as having race, under the guise of cultural difference arguments, to uplift themselves from *their* race problem.[14] The dominant discourse does not see how race affects the subjectivity of whites, rather it upholds and legitimates the marginalization of those deemed ethnic and cultural (Paquet, 1994, pp. 68-69; Fiske, 1992, p. 154).

Multiculturalism and Ethnic Identity

Canadian ethnicism is perpetuated and endorsed by the legalization of multicultural ideology through multicultural policy.[15] There is a direct relationship between the recognition of ethnic cultures and the validation of a colourblind society based on individualism, meritocracy and universalism. Multiculturalist ideology upholds Canada as a tolerant, accepting, accommodating and just society: it purports to address the needs of and protect the rights of all members of society irrespective of race.[16] It prevails as a source of pride for Canadians, particularly since Canadian multiculturalism is positioned against what is commonly touted as the less tolerant and significantly more racist melting pot to the south. On an international level

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"prejudice" from within a color-and power-evasive repertoire. The models of colonialism and neoimperialism have, at least, the advantage that they view racism as structuring historical forces. However, they too can have connotations of the foreign, the far away, and the long past (p. 170).

[14] Brand (1990) also acknowledges that it is not the sole responsibility of visible minorities to educate and change the views of white people. Part of white hegemony is to keep visible minorities concerned with racism while white people take little responsibility. Brand states: "...racism is not our problem. I think it's a white problem. I think we can fight against it. I think it's our job to fight for good laws, to fight for equality, but in terms of doing things like changing white attitudes, white people have to do that work (p. 274)."

[15] For a discussion of Canadian multiculturalism see Moodley (1983), Taylor (1994), Kymlicka (1995), Bissoondath (1994), Fleras and Elliott (1992), Hryniuk (1992), Lewycky (1992), Abu-Laban and Stasiulis (1992) and Underleider (1996).

[16] This statement is not meant to negate the fact that Canada is a relatively tolerant nation. Hutcheon (1990) states that: "While the view of Canada as a tolerant, welcoming nation is to some extent valid, the fiction and dialogues here suggest that it must not be accepted without acknowledging an equally compelling history of intolerance... (p. 11)".

multiculturalism affirms Canada's role as a peacemaking nation committed to democracy and justice. The apparent positive recognition of minority groups implies that it is unnecessary to investigate systemic inequalities since dominant ideology states that if cultural differences are accounted for racism would cease to exist (Razack, 1995, pp. 67-68).

Therefore, multiculturalism proposes to celebrate and validate the unique cultural qualities and contributions of groups defined as ethnic, however it defines ethnic cultures primarily as a set of essentialized aesthetic practices. Ethnic groups are represented as being homogeneous as well as possessing unified, easily definable cultures which are fundamentally distinct and apart from the norm. Multicultural and cultural difference theories neglect to address the fact that the dominant society dictates the boundaries and characteristics of ethnicity. These boundaries construct white Anglo society and individuals as the pervasive and yet invisible norm from which difference departs (and more specifically white middle-class, heterosexual male).

For example, Anderson (1991) notes that throughout Canadian history and up to the present "Chinese" has been constructed in opposition to everything that stands for white Canada (pp. 24-26 and chapter seven). Furthermore, since the inception of multicultural policy, "Chinese" and "Chinatown" have served as a focal point to represent Canada's recognition and validation of difference. She states:

> Chinatown had become a local expression of "difference," to be respected and valued for its contribution to the uniquely Canadian ideal of unity through diversity. Without regard for the history of its making, political figures of the 1970s at all levels saw in Chinatown an ethnic element that could not be left to the forces of assimilation and homogenization. It had itself become a powerful symbol of the new Canada, the land where the Chinese were "separate but equal," free...to be Chinese (p. 212).

Rosaldo (1989) attests that the possession of culture is related to a lack of power and the exercising of power is related to a lack of culture. He goes on to explain that, "If

"they" [minorities] have an explicit monopoly on authentic culture, "we" [majority] have an unspoken one on institutional power (p. 202).".

The wielding of power is directly related to the relegation of East Asians as culturally distinct hyphenated Canadians. One is automatically and perpetually a hyphenated Canadian due to racial visibility (Brand, 1990, p. 272). Moreover, the integral part of the hyphenated status is the part that differentiates: it marks social identity, one's association with a group whereas a Canadian is an individual and is white (see Simms, 1993). This homogenization of visible minorities as hyphenated Canadians negates differences arising from gender, class, sexuality, disability and history in Canada. The effect of hyphenation is to keep each culture pure and in its place; however, for many cultural minorities (particularly second and third generation) the hyphen represents a lack of cultural purity on the one hand and a lack of Canadianness on the other. The amount of "culture" a visible minority possesses is proportionate to the amount he or she conforms to the dominant perceptions of one's ethnic group which for East Asians is generally Chinese. However, an attempt to lose one's difference and assimilate is futile since a hyphenated Canadian being non-white lacks Canadianness. Although hyphenated Canadians are not considered authentic, that is, culturally lacking, it is important to emphasize that "lacking culture" is different from "true" Canadians lacking culture. Ethnic lack is a signifier of silence and majority lack a marker of authority. Visible minorities become invisible since they are not yet, nor can they ever be, what they should be (Canadian) and are no longer what they were (a pure ethnicity). Multicultural rhetoric states that visible minorities are both Canadian as well as ethnic; however the hyphenation continually places emphasis on where one is from. For "hyphenated ethnics" there is the expectation that they have to be all things to all people. It is seen as sad when ethnic minorities lose their fluency in their ethnic language but they also must be able to speak English fluently without an accent. These expectations do not exist for the dominant society and are a sign of privilege.

Canadian Identity and the (In)Visibility of Whiteness

Jay (1995) defines white as primarily a political category. He states:

> What holds white people together is not a common language, religion, cuisine, literature, or philosophy, but rather a political arrangement that distributes power and resources by skin color... To be a white person is to have certain advantages, socially and politically and economically, but being white does provide you with a culture (p. 124).

Contrary to the specificity of visible minorities, the dominant society is the universal, cultureless (or culturally neutral), continually developing, and indefinable entity known as Canadian. The dominant society is preoccupied with defining the meaning of Canadian precisely because it is seen as a difficult task; however, ethnic minorities should be able to define exactly what they are and present it without complications. Therefore, racism cannot be understood without looking at the ways in which it has been and is pivotal to the production of a dominant white Canadian identity (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992, p. 59).[17] The authority of center is based on its absence as the all encompassing norm, the lack of consciousness of the production of the dominant culture combined with the strategic marginalization of Others (Ferguson, 1990, pp. 11-13; McLelland and Richmond, 1994, p. 672; Young, 1995, p. 91). Lugones (1990) maintains that the practice of not seeing the dominant culture as specific amounts to "...a radical form of passivity toward the ideology of the ethnocentric racial state which privileges the dominant culture as the only culture to "see with" and conceives this seeing as to be done non-self consciously (p. 51)." The confusion surrounding Canadian identity has to do with the claim to universal subjectivity. Canadian identity cannot appear to be racialized because it would subvert Canada's liberal tradition to universal sameness and individual difference.

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[17] A distinction can be made between Canada as a political nation with its regional, historical, constitutional and legal differences and individuals who can and do define themselves as Canadian. Only certain members may freely and without question proclaim, "I am Canadian". For the majority the question of, "Who is or what is Canadian?" may be very complex, however, for visible minorities, there is the acknowledgment that to be Canadian is to be white.

Being Canadian is said to be confusing and unclear because being a dominant white race must remain confusing and unclear. The power of whiteness is masked by nationhood. And nationhood is masked by policies proclaiming multicultural identity. Pajaczkowska and Young (1992) maintain that:

> An identity based on power never has to develop consciousness of itself as responsible, it has no sense of its limits except as these are perceived in opposition to others. The blankness of identity of empire covers an ambivalence which is often unconscious, and which, consequently, can most readily be perceived in the representations it creates of the colonial 'other'; representations which are projections of the 'split off' parts of the self (p. 202).

White society defines itself through defining the boundaries of others (Young, 1995, p. 5). White involves fashioning an identity by consuming and appropriating minority cultures. As hooks (1992) cites Scapp:

> Liberals may pride themselves in their ability to tolerate others but it is only after the other has been redescribed as oneself that the liberal is able to be "sensitive" to the question of cruelty and humiliation. This act of redescription is still an attempt to appropriate others, only here it is made to sound as if it were a generous act. It is an attempt to make an act of consumption appear to be an act of acknowledgment (p. 13).

White also involves having the choice to be liberal and tolerant of Others. However, for whites being liberal is representative of privilege while the structures which create the privilege are unquestioned and maintained (Jay, 1995, p. 125). As McLaren (1992) cites Grossberg, "Declaring oneself to be on the side of the oppressed too often serves as a way of avoiding the more difficult task of locating the points at which one already identifies and is identified with those who hold power in society (p. 138)." Only the oppressor can choose to be on the side of the oppressed. The oppressed can "choose" to deny their oppression, resist it or perhaps even benefit from it by working with it however; the oppressed cannot choose to be on the side of the oppressed (to the same degree) since they part of the oppressed.

In addition, practices are defined as exclusionary when they appear to exclude those in power. Therefore, efforts made by a white person to appreciate East Asian culture would be defined as inclusionary and/or exceptional, whereas the efforts of an East Asian to celebrate their own culture would be seen as exclusionary and/or typical and commonsensical since it is expected (see Codjoe, 1994). Okihiro (1994) notes that:

> ...acts of resistance, protests against injustice, and insurgency against the established order are quickly labeled divisive, destructive, nationalistic, and self-serving. In that way, the civil rights movement - a social movement that sought to remove barriers, a movement that sought to guarantee and protect the rights of all Americans, a movement that sought a more inclusive society - was depicted as a "Negro" movement, as "their" cause, as for "them" (p. 155).

White exists on the plane of the 'I' rather than the 'We'. To be white is to be an individual rather than to belong to a cultural or racial identity (see Jay, 1995, p. 123). Therefore imbedded with being white is the freedom to represent oneself as an individual and be seen and treated as an individual.

a) The Body, Race and Culture

Race is firmly and inescapably tied to the body. Iris Marion Young (1990) affirms that, "[w]hen the dominant culture defines some groups as different, as the Other, the members of those groups are imprisoned in their bodies (p. 123)." In a climate of culturalized racism, culture too is firmly attached to race and therefore the body. "Asian culture", "Japanese culture", and "Chinese culture" is, in fact, one large, homogenous racial category since the culture of East Asians is defined by and given value by the dominant society which distinguishes according to race. "Asian culture" is based on a number of racist stereotypes which assist in the management, structuring and perpetuation of white hegemony. Cultural differences do exist between Western Canadian culture and other cultural groups to varying degrees (as will be discussed in Chapter four), however, for visible minorities, one's race represents one's culture and

racial stereotypes are intermingled with what one's culture is stated to be. Liu (1992) recognized that "...it is impossible to define the "culture" of a group apart from the struggles over the meaning of specific practices and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion... (p. 157)." For visible minorities, the body encompasses the essence of one's character, that is one's culture. The body is given meaning through the social order.

Since people of colour are associated with their bodies they are represented as incapable of achieving complex and fluid cultures. This stereotypical culture renders visible minorities more invisible as well as visible relative to whites. Young (1990) affirms that:

> Often without noticing they do so, the dominant groups project their own experience as representative of humanity.... Given the normality of its own cultural expression and identity, the dominant group constructs the differences which some groups exhibit as lack and negation. These groups become marked as Other. ...The culturally dominated undergo a paradoxical oppression, in that they are both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time rendered invisible.... These stereotypes so permeate the society that they are not noticed as contestable.... White males,..., insofar as they escape group marking, can be individuals (p. 59).

The inability to choose one's social and personal identity is grounded in the inability to escape from one's socially visible body. For visible minorities, who do not exist apart from images, identity is a complex mix of what one chooses, what is forced upon you and how one works with these dictated images. East Asian identity is, in part, centered around the resistance of, acceptance of, and the denial of, dictated representations of oneself and the inability to control these images (the construction of identity for East Asians will be delved into further in Chapter four). A sense of powerlessness arises since the cultures and bodies of people of colour are without individuality and complexity. As perpetually represented and representatives of a supposed unified group their cultures and their visible bodies are continually constructed to address and serve the desires and fears of the majority (Ferguson, 1990,

p. 12). Minority cultures can only reinvent themselves within the parameters of representation available to them (Chambers, 1996; Chambers, 1994 and hooks, 1992). Racism works to distinguish minority groups by assigning minority groups an essential homogeneous difference which is negatively defined. However, this does not imply that racism is consistent, coherent or conscious of its own making. The objectified Other, and their dictated cultural differences is simultaneously desired and disdained, displayed and hidden, seen to possess bounty and lack, exemplify Canadianness when successful and foreignness in failure.[18]

EAST ASIANS REPRESENTED AND POSITIONED

For East Asians, identity often is confined within an either/or dichotomy whereby they are represented as being either assimilated mascots and/or honorary whites or as foreigners and immigrants (Trinh, 1994 cites Chin, p. 17; Kim, 1992, p. xi; Chang, 1994, p. 259). East Asians have the "non-choice" of being either different, particular and inferior or nondescript, identical and invisible (the struggle to deal with this silencing will be dealt with further in Chapter four).[19] The narratives which perpetuate these representations have been termed the yellow peril and model minority stereotypes. Similarly, stereotypes of East Asians as the model and the peril have been imbedded into North American culture to assist in the management and structuring of a white dominated society. Sleeter (1996) defines these stereotypes as "racist truth-claims" and states that they, "...draw their authority from contexts of

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[18] Jordan and Weedon (1995) indicate that:

> The history of Western racism and domination over people of Colour is not one in which Black, Brown, Red and Yellow people are simply despised. Rather, it is a history in which they - their bodies, their cultures - have served as a source of both ATTRACTION and REPULSION. The victims of racial domination can be admired as much as they are hated and denigrated (p. 263, emphasis in original).

[19] The binarisms are indicative of the dichtomization of assimilationist and pluralist ideology where one cannot be both assimilated and different. Under the dominant ideology the degree of assimilation is directly related to the lack of ethnic attachment and ethnic attachment is related to a lack of assimilation into society. Therefore, one cannot be both Canadian and ethnic since these are mutually exclusive entities (see Kim and Hurh, 1993).

human power struggles and exclusion. Such truth-claims, projected through various forms of language and media, authorize and normalize forms of domination and control (p. viii)."

Western culture is premised on dichotomies. These dichotomies are powerful since they are easily accessible. Clifford (1988) states that:

> If Orientalism as Said describes it, has a structure, this resides in its tendency to dichotomize the human continuum into we-they contrasts and to essentialize the resultant "other" - to speak of the oriental mind, for example, or even to generalize about "Islam" or "the Arabs". All of these Orientalist "visions" and "textualizations," as Said terms them, function to suppress an authentic "human" reality (p. 256).

The model minority posits East-Asians as hard working, industrious, docile, compliant, well mannered, "individuals" who live in close-knit, well disciplined families and hold a deep respect for education (see Brest and Oshigi, 1995; Omi and Takagi, 1996; Chun, 1995; Lowe, 1996 and Okihiro, 1994). Conversely, the yellow peril narrative posits East Asians as a cunning, fanatical, upwardly mobile, cheap and aggressive horde who hold an unwavering allegiance to their own group (Okihiro, 1994; Hoppenstand, 1983; Smart and Smart, 1996 and Roy, 1989). The yellow peril and model minority narratives will be discussed separately. However, it is imperative to note that East Asians are simultaneously the model and the peril. Both narratives exist side by side and validate each other. Okihiro (1994) argues that the model minority narrative arose out of the yellow peril discourse in order to deal with its presence.

> Whether threatening the state through armed insurrection or invasion, the economy through cheap labor and foreign trade, the race through miscegenation and rape, or the culture through paganism and barbarism, nonwhites served as both object and subject in Europe's defense of its holiest possessions. But the yellow peril was not the only enduring icon of white supremacy, nor was it free of ambiguity and contradiction. Europe's colonization of Asia ... created Asian versions of European polities and economies, under the tutorship of the West. Those copies were ludicrous, flattering, and threatening all at once. They were seen as cheap imitations (mimicries), as products of

> admiration (as children emulate parents), and as subversions of the original text (grotesque representations of the European identity). Those meanings gave rise to the complementary, benign image of Asians, called today the "model minority" (p. 139).

The fear of East Asians as a potential danger is mixed with a pseudo-reverence[20] based on exoticization and a respect for East Asians as the "...not-so-perfect but perfectly acceptable copies of white folks (Anderson, 1991, p. 242)."[21] Anderson (1991) indicates that:

> ...both negatively and positively evaluated characteristics were ascribed deterministically to people of Chinese origin to either suppress or capitalize on expressions of their "difference." And to this day, benign conceptions of the resplendent East and the industrious Chinese persist alongside "Hongcouver's" [as Vancouver is sometimes known] more classical fears about its wealthy new "Yacht-people" (p. 249).

Whether East Asians are Othered as the peril or the model both stereotypes help to distinguish East Asians from white and help define white identity.[22] The model minority and the yellow peril maintains essentialized boundaries of East and West, of East Asians and Canadian. The East versus West dichotomy leaves no space to

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[20] I state pseudo-reverence because people can only be revered for individual characteristics. It is pseudo-reverence for being the model minority without overreaching to become the yellow peril.

[21] Anderson's (1991) work is exclusive to Chinese in Vancouver, however, the quote applies to East Asians in general since any person of East Asian background is generally perceived as Chinese or Japanese and Japanese are also the model minority.

[22] Elaine Kim (1982) states that within Anglo-American literature East Asians are divided into the "good" Asians and the "bad" Asians in order to define white identity. She states that:

> In both cases, the Anglo-American portrayal of the Asian serves primarily as a foil to describe the Anglo as "not-Asian": when the Asian is heartless and treacherous, the Anglo is shown indirectly as imbued with integrity and humanity; when the Asian is a cheerful and docile inferior, he projects the Anglo's benevolence and importance. The comical, cowardly servant placates a strong and intelligent white master; the helpless heathen is saved by a benevolent white savior; the clever Chinese detective solves mysteries for the benefit of his ethical white clients and colleagues. A common threat running through these portrayals is the establishment of and emphasis on permanent and irreconcilable differences between the Chinese and the Anglo, differences that define the Anglo as superior physically, spiritually, and morally (pp. 4-5).

represent the increasing existence of the hybrid identities of many Canadians of East Asian heritage.[23]

The Yellow Peril Stereotype: Contemporary Manifestations

Throughout Canadian history East Asians have been portrayed as a threat to the preservation of Canadian society and in particular white hegemony.[24] White fear of losing power, whether real or imagined, was revealed in economic, religious and sexual arguments which predicted the eventual end of, or at least a drastic change for, Canadian society. Combining both personal and national anxieties, the yellow peril justified white domination. Four elements constitute the yellow peril narrative. East Asians are: a) a huge homogenous mass that dispossess non-Asians of economic resources; b) conniving manipulators who are conspiring to destroy white society; c) self-serving, blood thirsty murderers who hold little respect for human life and; d) will take over white society if left unchecked (Hoppenstand, 1983, p. 176-177). All four elements exist in contemporary Canadian society.

The fear of East Asians is related to Western fears that the rise of the Pacific Rim nations will inextricably alter present international and national power relations. Efforts to perpetuate white hegemony are couched in nationalistic arguments which focus on the preservation of a cultural, economic and moral status quo. Issues of race and racism are sidelined. For example, North (1996) queried that immigration is not new but:

> What *is* new is that todays Asian immigrants are unlike any other people to move in such numbers from anywhere: they're simply the richest, most politically powerful and best educated people ever to leave one country en masse for another. In our own phlegmatic Canadian way, we are bracing ourselves for the possibility of a clash

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[23] The East also identifies itself by distinguishing itself from the West. Ferguson (1990) and Mercer (1990) note that the significance of margin and center are deduced from each other. However, the West, as the center, rather than the East, has the power to define the terms by which success, beauty, and wealth will be judged. Likewise on an international level the North defines the South.

[24] For a historical analysis of the yellow peril discourse see Marchetti (1993), Hoppenstand (1983), Roy (1989), Okihiro (1994) and Anderson (1991).

> that has little to do with race and everything to do with competition over of all kinds, resources, values, culture, power (pp. 49-50, italics in original).

Michael Goldberg, as cited by Smart and Smart (1996), explains that Vancouver was of great media interest in the late 1980s since it became 'a metaphor for the dawning Pacific Rim reality' (p. 40).[25] The relationship between Canada (and more accurately the United States) and the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore and so forth have always affected the everyday lives of East Asians in North America (as evidenced by the internment of Canadians of Japanese origin). Canadians of East Asian descent, regardless of how long they have lived in Canada or even if they were born in Canada are identified as indistinguishable from the people and nations of the "motherland" (see Razack, 1995, p. 68 and Roy, 1989, p. 232). East Asians are seen as a homogenous mass because they are represented as a unified racial category/group. Regardless of country of origin and history in Canada, all East Asians have been and are associated with Japanese investors, Vietnamese boat people, Japanese tourists, English as a Second Language students (E.S.L.), Asian gangs and Hong Kong immigrants. The specific stereotype chosen depends on the context and the purpose or effect desired by the one who chooses it.

The focus of the yellow peril has changed throughout history and there has been the "good" Asians and the "bad" Asians.[26] The narrative defining which Asians are "good" and which ones are "bad" is white hegemony. Since East Asians are identified through race, all representations of any East Asian group affects all other East Asians.

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[25] There are approximately 25% ethnic Chinese living in Vancouver and 22% ethnic Chinese living in Richmond, B.C. (Pacific Rim Report, January 26, 1997).

[26] During the early twentieth century the Japanese were the upwardly mobile villains and the Chinese the docile "coolies" (see Roy, 1989). During the Cold War the Chinese personified evil whereas the Japanese were the smart industrious commercially viable Asians (see Hoppenstand, 1983, p. 181). The tide towards Japan changed however when Japanese success began to encroach on Western economic and political power. Along with Japan the countries identified as the mini-dragons (Singapore, Korea and Taiwan) also are feared and admired.

Therefore, Wayson Choy (1995), in his novel, *The Jade Peony*, discusses how during W.W.II, the Chinese in Vancouver avoided the wrath of white hatred for the Japanese by wearing buttons stating they were not Japanese. Moreover, during the L.A. riots in 1992, Kim (1995) reports that Chinese and Japanese Americans, "...headed for the hills screaming, "I'm not Korean" (p. 17)." In contemporary times, "Red China" has become the dominant example of the yellow peril. China is seen as a sleeping giant which is awakening and ready to explode onto the world scene. This fear is further enhanced by the arrival of a large number of Hong Kong immigrants to Canada. North (1996) indicates that, "Perhaps in the collective awareness - because the long-waited 1997 Chinese takeover is now imminent - Hong Kong has come to symbolize Canadian fears and hopes about immigrants (p. 50)." Therefore, in this age of increasing globalization, the yellow peril is fueled by the fear of the East in the West.

The recent increase of Hong Kong immigrants to Canada, and in particular Vancouver (and to a lesser extent Toronto) has disturbed traditional perceptions of immigrants. In the past, immigrants were seen as ill-educated people who generally occupy the low income bracket, hold manual labour jobs, and live within their ethnic neighbourhoods in poorer, run down, less favorable areas of the city. Rather, a large number of Hong Kong immigrants have purchased homes in some of the most established and exclusive white dominated upper-middle or upper-class sections of cities. Smart and Smart (1996) state that in Vancouver, the change in the demographic, socio-economic, cultural, and political composition of the city has brought about protests and criticisms.[27] The homes built by Hong Kong immigrants are commonly referred to as 'monster homes' (Abu-Laban, 1997 and Smart and Smart, 1996). Hoppenstand (1983) notes that throughout history East Asians were

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[27] There was a flood of phone calls to protest the first ever publication of a full page all Chinese add in *The Province* (one of two daily Vancouver newspapers) by A & B Sound. There is a growing trend of mainstream businesses in Canada catering to ethnic groups (particularly Chinese) in order to capitalize on their perceived wealth and believed propensity to spend. Due to the uproar, an A& B Sound spokesperson stated that next time the add will be accompanied by an equivalent English add (Pacific Rim, January 26, 1997).

primarily described as beasts and monsters that preyed on Western society (p. 174). East Asians are indirectly being portrayed as monsters who take over neighbourhoods and communities. In order to combat the encroachment of 'monster homes', white elite dominated areas of Vancouver, such as Shaughnessy, have institutionalized Anglo tastes and standards by enforcing new design guidelines. These building codes operate under the guise of 'historical preservation', 'livability' and 'distinctive neighbourhood character' (Smart and Smart, 1996, pp. 39-40). Faced with an inability to control the "intrusion" of Hong Kong immigrants into these neighbourhoods, communities have had to settle for regulations which manage them. Hong Kong immigrants have received a great deal of attention since they are not staying in their place and they are disrupting the sense of place and space the white elite have come to enjoy (Smart and Smart, 1996, pp. 34 and 38). Incursion of space and place are significant.

> The built and physical environments are negotiated realities, in other words, contingent outcomes of changing and often competing versions of reality and practice. In that sense, landscapes are linked in circular relation to ideological formations, systems of power, and sets of social relations (Anderson, 1991, p. 28).

Therefore, race and racism are not just ideas which circulate in peoples' minds but are grounded in policies, practices and landscapes. The advance of East Asians into white neighbourhoods must be controlled due to dominant perceptions that East Asians will takeover white society if left unchecked.

Hong Kong immigrants also are threatening due to the perception that East Asians are morally corrupt, money hungry entrepreneurs.[28] Their thirst for money is equal to their disregard for social issues. Ethnocentrism combined with racism portrays Hong

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[28] Marketing data from *Maclean's* magazine, as cited by So in North (1996), indicates that: "Canadians who read or speak Chinese are 24 percent more likely than average to be classified as aggressive achievers... (p. 54)." *Maclean's* also stated that "native Chinese speakers want to be leaders, love status-signaling goods, are bargain hunters, are more likely to have pay TV and like to flaunt their material possessions (p. 54)."

Kong immigrants as ruthless developers who destroy the physical and moral environment of communities. Smart and Smart (1996) affirm that:

> 'Money' becomes opposed to 'community,' a placeless search for the highest profits in contrast to a grounded and emplaced network of social ties and common values. In this context, Hong Kong migrants can be easily vilified by placing them within the role of the 'ruthless developer' (p. 35).

Smart and Smart (1996) go on to note that, "This theme of 'profit versus sentiment' has been merged with that of the 'developer versus the community' and here becomes associated with the East Asian/Canadian dichotomy (p. 41)." The cunning entrepreneurs signify danger since their presence is seen to be indicative of the invasion of a foreign nation rather than that of an individual or group of individuals.[29] The dichtomization of foreign developers and Canadian is further enhanced by the cultural practices of some Hong Kong immigrants whereby there is increasing concern over what has been termed "astronaut kids". "Astronaut kids" are so termed since it is believed that their parents spend more time in the air than on the ground. The children of Hong Kong immigrants reside in Canada and enjoy the high standard of living while their parents live mainly in Hong Kong since it is easier to make money in Hong Kong (Pacific Rim, January 26, 1997). Interestingly enough, this condemnation of Hong Kong immigrants is mixed with a reverence for East Asian loyalty and commitment to family and community.

East Asians are accepted as long as they stay within the confined geographical boundaries of their communities. A small number can move into white

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[29] Similarities exist between the present depiction of Hong Kong immigrants and Sax Rohmer's description of his creation, Dr. Fu-Manchu. As cited by Hoppenstand (1983):

> Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green. Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the resources, if you will, of a wealthy government - which, however, already has denied all knowledge of his existence. Imagine that awful being, and you have a mental picture of Dr. Fu-Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man (p. 172).

neighbourhoods but they must remain a small silent and passive group who do not exert socio-economic and political power. The token "ethnic" or "ethnics" in a community are tolerated since they serve to validate a meritocratic society. A sense of control is obtained when one can go and visit the "ethnic" to get a dose of culture and the exotic - to get a bit of the Other. Bissoondath (1994) discusses the historical migration of the Chinese out of Chinatown and the subsequent discomfort amongst the majority:

> It was all so controllable before. The Chinese were seen as silent, hardworking, dispassionate people. They keep to themselves, procreating rather spectacularly, living in tiny, dark rooms, playing mah-jong, gambling in "dens." Now, though, they are going beyond their traditional enclaves, are even unblanding the Toronto suburb of Scarborough with a new Chinatown. And this is profoundly unsettling to those who would rather have their multicultural exoticism safely caged, costumed and staged. We are being forced by events, both here and abroad, to admit that these are people pushing the boundaries of their stereotype. We are being forced to confront their wholeness (p. 85).

The Other is a Western construct and so is an "authentic Chinese". Occasionally choosing to experience the Other at one's leisure requires the actors in Chinatown to behave and look as the West sees them. To visit the "ethnic" allows one to reaffirm ones dominant position in society without ever leaving it.[30] Visible minorities can contain their traditional food, clothing and dances in their homes and show it off on specified occasions and locations but they should want to integrate and try to become Canadians.

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[30] The most potent form of dominating the Other and thus affirming but not leaving one's dominant position is through sexual relations with women of the group in question. East Asians, like other visible minorities, are also objectified sexually as well as racially and culturally. As stated by Marchetti (1993):

> One of the most potent aspects of the yellow peril discourses is the sexual danger of contact between the races. Although the power of the lascivious Asian woman to seduce the white male has long been part of the fantasy, a far more common scenario involves the threat posed by the Asian male to the white woman (p. 3).

Attitudes towards East Asians change when 'they' become successful and move into 'our' neighbourhoods and become 'our' neighbours (see Lee, 1996, p. 122). Okihiro (1994) notes that: "The very indices of Asian American "success" can imperil the good order of race relations when the margins lay claim to the privileges of the mainstream (p. 141). Hoppenstand (1983) states that the yellow peril arises out of jealousy. The backlash against Hong Kong immigrants is in part due to jealousy of it as a colony that may have superseded its white master. At the same time, distrust arises when East Asians "choose" to live and work within the confines of their communities. Mistrust ensues from the belief that East Asians are self-serving opportunists who conspire to bring down white society. Congregations of Chinatowns, Japantowns, and Koreatowns reaffirm dominant beliefs that East Asians cannot contribute to the whole of society. It also affirms that East Asians are exclusionary and will perpetuate racism with their segregationist attitudes. Segregation is believed to lead to racism and therefore East Asians are blamed for perpetuating racism and intolerance.

Rosaldo (1989) proposed that:

> More generally, race relations in North America involve a blend of assimilationist efforts, raw prejudice, and cultural containment that revolve around a concerted effort to keep each culture pure and in its place. Members of racial minority groups receive a peculiar message: either join the mainstream or stay in your ghettos, barrios, and reservations, but don't try to be both mobile and cultural (p. 212).

Rosaldo is correct in his assertions regarding cultural containment; however, contrary to Rosaldo's claims, persons described as ethnic are expected to be both mobile and cultural. However, ethnic minorities cannot become too successful and they must be successful on white terms by becoming the model minority.

The White Racial Hierarchy

Racism operates according to an Us/Them dichotomy, however, the categories of Us and Them are not stable. Who occupies the category of Us and who occupies the

category of Them changes according to context. East Asians are silenced in North American societies partly due to their temporary strategic positioning in the Us category with whites. East Asians occupy the category of Us with whites when doing so can perpetuate white hegemony and the category of Them when they are perceived as a threat to white domination.[31] Ikemoto (1993) points out that in the Los Angeles riots, Koreans were positioned as white since they were victims of Blacks and champions of the American Dream. Within the Black-white racial dichotomy, which dominates American race discourse, this allowed white to be the victim (p. 1591).[32] Minority groups are positioned along a sliding scale between Us and Them based on Western desires, fears and guilt.[33]

Race discourse is not a matter of white vs. non-white: a hierarchy exists. Due to the construction of the racial hierarchy, many minority groups see East Asians as a threat to their place on the hierarchy. Conflict arises since whites create the racial

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[31] Marchetti (1993) also points out that East Asians personify the Other when doing so means the avoidance of Others who are more threatening: "[Hollywood] used Asians, Asians Americans, and Pacific Islanders as signifiers of racial otherness to avoid the far more immediate tensions between blacks and whites or the ambivalent mixture of guilt and enduring hatred toward Native Americans and Hispanics (p. 6)."

[32] East Asians often are aligned with whites in the affirmative action debate. The Right argues that affirmative action policies at universities discriminates against Asian-Americans and whites thus aligning Asian Americans with Whites. Right political discourse renders Asians as victims in order to mask white hegemony. Omi and Takagi (1996) highlighted a case in California where:

> The Cooks [who complained that their son was denied admission to the UC San Diego Medical School due to his white race] claimed that at UC Davis, for example, Chicanos were offered admission at five times the rate of whites and nineteen times the rate of Japanese Americans. The signal was clear. "Preferential policies" victimized Asian Americans as much as, perhaps more than, whites (p. 156).

[33] Within Canada, Underleider (1996) reveals that according to recent polls the Chinese are the most accepted visible minority group in Canada with Sikhs being the least acceptable visible minority group. Underleider states that:

> Their responses...show that members of every "invisible" minority group tend to be better accepted than members of any of the "visible" minorities. Among the visible minorities, those that are different in physical appearance but wear standard Canadian clothing (Chinese and blacks) seem to be much better accepted those that often continue to wear traditional ethnic costumes (Arabs, Moslems, Indo--Pakistanis and Sikhs). Sikhs, who are the most likely to dress in ways that differ significantly from mainstream Canadian habits, are the least accepted group (p. 48).

See Table 5: Percentage of Canadians Who are Comfortable with Immigrant Group (page 48).

hierarchy while minority groups fight amongst each other to seek a higher position on the hierarchy. Ikemoto (1993) states that, "When racial identity is constructed oppositionally, conflict becomes inevitable and coalition becomes unimaginable, and both groups are publicly debilitated and exposed (p. 1583)". In addition white society and the construction of the hierarchy is ignored while minority groups become further labeled as deviant. There is a built in assumption that minority groups can affect their place in the hierarchy by chasing after the American dream. Thus one strives to become a "model" minority. In this sense any person belonging to a subordinated Other group can become a "model" for their group. It denotes positionality on the racial hierarchy. However, (unlike East Asians being *the* model minority) it is the positioning of the individual in relation to one's group and to white society, that is she or he is a "model" Black person.[34] It means that one chooses to work within the confines of the racial hierarchy without questioning its legitimacy. A "model" minority may indirectly or directly choose to support and maintain the subordination of her or his group. To be a "model" minority, one needs to disassociate her or himself from racism and believe in meritocratic success and colorblind justice or espouse the racism they have experienced but emphasized how they have surpassed it. To focus on social mobility with a clear conscious people of colour may invest in the myth of sameness and equality irrespective of race. Therefore for some visible minorities benefiting from power structures can lead to an engagement with racism only insofar as it prevents one from climbing the social ladder (see Clarkson, 1989).

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[34] Unlike East Asians who are constructed as the model minority due to inherent characteristics of the whole group, being a "model" for other visible minorities means that they do not fit the "negative" stereotypes of one's group (for example, drunk violent person in an out of jail for First Nations and Blacks). Nonetheless, a "model" visible minority would encompass some characteristics of the model minority stereotype such as success in education and the labour force. For Blacks being a "model" in relation to one's group often means they are successful in an athletic sport or in the entertainment field (for example Tiger Woods in golf and Bill Cosby in acting and comedy). This becomes incorporated into the stereotypes of Blacks and one becomes a "model" for what Black people can and should be. Therefore, for visible minorities one cannot be a successful individual; they are a "model" representative of their group.

The way to increase one's social mobility is to follow all the rules put forward. However, visible minorities do not have the power to determine the rules. Harris (1993) states that:

> Previous reified definitions of race compelled abandonment of racial identity in exchange for economic and social privileges. Under the operative racial hierarchy passing is the ultimate assimilationist move - the submergence of a subordinate cultural identity in favor of dominant identity, assumed to achieve better societal fit within prevailing norms (p. 1765).

In American society Lee (1996) notes that white viewpoint of East Asians is heavily guided by the relationship between whites and African Americans. White attitudes towards East Asians are influenced by their position relative to East Asians. Successful whites feel less threatened by East Asian success than unsuccessful whites since East Asian success justifies white success based on merit (Lee, 1996, p. 95). East Asians also understand their Americanness relative to Blacks in the United States and Canadianness relative to other visible minorities such as East Indians, First Nations and Blacks. Blacks understand their position as Americans relative to East Asians as well. As stated by Lee (1996): "Although white students were well represented in the upper ranks and in the higher tracks, the majority of African American students concentrated their criticism on what they perceived to be the overrepresentation of Asians in the academic elite (p. 99)." The boundaries associated with an essentialized notion of Black also factors into the recent confrontations between Blacks and Koreans in the United States. Thus Koreans are blamed for their prosperity and the lack of prosperity of Blacks and the structure of American society is left untouched.[35] Ikemoto (1993) states that:

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[35] Some of the Koreans Abelmann and Lie (1995) interviewed believed that the United States government made a conscious decision to sacrifice Koreatown and Koreans. Blacks were allowed to take out their frustrations on Koreans. The National Guard eventually stepped in but only to protect white neighbourhoods. This reinforced to Koreans that they are not seen as Americans and are not wanted (p. 38).

> With respect to African Americans, the master narrative tells us that Asians are Koreans who are merchants and crime victims. The assumption that Asians are foreign intruders underlies this description. With respect to Asian Americans, the narrative tells us that African Americans are Blacks who are criminals who are poor. All of these identities replicate the dominant society's understandings of blackness and Asianness (p. 1583).

The success of East Asians is emphasized in order to redirect attention away from whites and place the blame for failure on minority groups. Appiah (1996) notes that:

> If some minority groups - Korean-Americans, say - do especially well, most people feel, "More power to them." We worry then, about the minorities that fail. And the main reason why people currently worry about minorities that fail is that group failure may be evidence of injustice to individuals (p. 99).

Thus, the perceived success of East Asians continually emphasizes that it is not society which is failing minority groups but the minority groups inferior qualities which are a burden to society.

Which Asians get accepted and which Asians do not depends on Western representations and how much they conform to Western society. Although East Asians are represented as a homogenous group, a hierarchy exists amongst East Asian groups/cultures which is also defined by white society. Success is defined by the level of mainstream success. The Chinese and Japanese are on top of the East Asian hierarchy followed by Koreans. Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong and Filipino make up the bottom of the hierarchy. Which groups are at the top is dependent on their history in North America and placement of the "motherland" on the international hierarchy; however, it seems apparent that there is a clear connection with skin color. The "lighter" Asians are on top followed by the "darker" Asians. East Asians use the hierarchy to order themselves by disassociating themselves from the "bad Asian". Hence Asians are racist towards other Asians who are deemed to be lesser than them, that is Chinese, Japanese, Koreans also fear and

disassociate themselves from Vietnamese. The center maintains its power by making all people in society believe in Western constructions.

In discussing Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Lorde (1984) recognizes that: "...the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us, and which knows only the oppressors' tactics, the oppressors' relationships (p. 123)." The creation of dichotomies and essentialized identities neglects to expose the complexities of interaction between racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. In addition, essentialized identity and the invisibility of whiteness does not expose the pervasiveness of these "isms" whereby everyone in racist, sexist, classist and homophobic societies are all of the above to some extent. If one is East Asian, for example, it does not mean that one cannot be racist and if one is white then one must be more so than anyone else (Stasiulis, 1995, p. 175). An East Asian person can be racist towards other East Asians and other visible minorities based on inferior characteristics defined by white society (for example degrees of darkness, height, whether one has an eye fold and so forth). However, the existence of power differentials means that East Asian people cannot be racist toward whites. People of colour may not have the power to create representations of themselves and others but they play a part in perpetuating and giving these stereotypes power. Nonetheless, no matter who is discriminating along racial boundaries in the end it benefits only whites. The racism of visible minorities is transferred racism. It is a direct result of powerlessness whereas white racism is an attempt to reaffirm power.

The Model Minority Stereotype: Contemporary Manifestations

Like the yellow peril, the model minority stereotype validates the status quo. The model minority stereotype serves to reinforce the status quo by denying the oppression of East Asians and reinforcing the oppression of racialized Others (see Chang, 1993,

p. 1260).[36] Lee (1996) defines the model minority stereotypes as, "...a hegemonic construct that influences the identity-formation among Asian Americans and influences interracial relations (p. 113)." East Asians are uniquely positioned as the model minority that affirms North American axioms of individualism and meritocracy. The model minority stereotype questions the efficacy of government social programs and validates the belief in culture being the source of a groups successes and failures (Brest and Oshigi, 1995; Chun, 1995; Lowe, 1996 and Kim, 1982, pp. 177-180). East Asians can personify the model minority since they have been historically exploited and excluded from Canadian society but are believed to have attained a great deal of socio-economic success.[37] This success is believed to be due to compatible cultural values such as hard work, intelligence, and support from family and community members.[38] East Asians are revered for their distinct cultures which, at times, in varying degrees of intensity, are touted to hold some of the answers to the problems of Western societies (for example Eastern religions, philosophies and medicines).[39]

Thus East Asians are a group who have suffered severe forms of racism in the past but have remained relatively apolitical and now exist as a model for the legitimation

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[36] Marchetti (1993) pointed out that the model minority arose to balance out the yellow peril as part of the master narrative. She states that, "...any act of domination brings with it opposition, guilt, repression, and resistance, which also must be incorporated into these myths and silenced, rationalized, domesticated, or otherwise eliminated (p. 6)." Therefore, the model minority myth in part serves to curb white guilt on an individual and social level. On an individual level a white person can rationalize their suspicions and fears towards Asians by stating that, "I fear the Vietnamese but the Chinese are doing well" or "They are bad drivers but I like the food." One can say I cannot be racist although I have a fear of Asian male youth in general because I like Chinese food and I go to Chinatown periodically.

[37] See Roy (1989) and Anderson (1991) for a discussion of the Vancouver Chinatown riots (1907), Japanese internment during W.W.II and various exclusionary acts.

[38] Razack (1995) cites the work of Macias who asserts that, "If Asians have patterns of high school achievement, (noting that clearly not all Asian groups do), these have more to do with histories of colonialism than they do with inherent cultural traits (p. 78)."

[39] The idea of East Asians as spiritual is a form of exoticization which serves to reinforce the East Asians/Canadian dichotomy. In addition, East Asians religious and philosophical distinction can easily be portrayed as paganism, superstition and backwardness (Okihiro, 1994, pp. 141-142).

of a just society based on merit.[40] The apparent success of East Asians is believed to represent the success of the fundamental philosophical underpinnings of North American societies - individualism, meritocracy and liberal humanism. The model minority stereotype legitimates the denial of racism, silences East Asians who do not fit the stereotype and ignores the history of East Asian resistance to racism (see Okihiro, 1994 and Sleeter, 1996). Lee (1996) recognizes that:

> The model minority stereotype is dangerous because it tells Asian Americans and other minorities how to behave. The stereotype is dangerous because it is used against other minority groups to silence claims of inequality. It is dangerous because it silences the experiences of Asian Americans who can/do not achieve model minority success. And finally, the stereotype is dangerous because some Asian Americans may use the stereotype to judge their self-worth... (p. 125).

For East Asians, attempts to self-define are limited to confusions by apparent majority acceptance and the reality that their oppression pales to other minority groups. Mitsuye Yamada (1983) defines Asian Americans as "...the visible minority that is invisible (p. 36)." The racism experienced by East Asians is delegitimated since they are the privileged minority "just below or better than whites" (Hahm, as cited by Abelmann and Lie, 1995, p. 33). As stated by one of Yamada's students who was offended by the Asian American anthology *Aiiieee!*, "*Their* anger made *me* angry, because I didn't even know the Asian Americans felt oppressed. I didn't expect their anger (p. 35, italics in original)." This confession came after many of Yamada's white students stated that they empathized with Black, Chicano and Native American anger. Therefore East Asians often are seen as doing too well and are beating whites at their own game. Conversely, the success of some East Asian individuals and families and the perceived success of the whole group benefits whites. East Asians have to live up to model minority ideal but not be too successful or they become the peril. East

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[40] Dominant discourse on East Asians in Canada focuses on them as either victims of historical discrimination, or on the multiculturalist focus of celebrating the ways in which they have contributed and are contributing to Canadian society (for example railroads and Chinatowns). Both representations validate the model minority stereotype.

Asians also are invisible due to East Asians internalization of the model minority stereotype. Lee (1996) affirms that in her study of Asian American high school students many Asian American students clung onto the myth of the model minority stereotype (p. 101). Faced with either being the peril or the model, many East Asians "chose" to validate the racist stereotype of them as the model. To believe in themselves as the model, East Asians also must identify themselves in relation to other visible minorities who are constructed in opposition to the model.

The power of the model minority stereotype is based on its apparent positive acceptance and recognition of East Asians. However, the model minority stereotype also contains negative elements. As stated by Brest and Oshigi (1995): "But while skilled in math and science, they have low verbal abilities and communication skills; they are one-dimensional "grinds," docile and lacking in personality and individuality (p. 893)." Therefore, East Asians are lacking in two characteristics which are held in high esteem in Western society: assertiveness and individuality. Rather than being assertive, East Asians, as stated earlier, are seen as overly aggressive and self-serving.

The perception of East Asians as feminine (passive and docile) is integral to being a model minority. Okihiro (1994) argues that both the yellow peril and the model minority are engendered stereotypes: "...the "masculine" yellow peril is imbued with "womanly" threats, and the "feminine" model minority with "manly" perils (p. xiv)." East Asians are silenced, in part, due to the belief that they are intrinsically silent, submissive, and self-effacing. However, the feminine model minority has elements of manly ambition, aggression and competition. Conversely, the masculine yellow peril is invested with stereotypically feminine characteristics such as cunning, sneaky, manipulative, indirect and erratic. Wong (1992) states that:

> For Asian Americans..., the effeminization (which is also to say emasculation) of the Asian man and the ultrafeminization of the Asian woman have long been a source of deep outrage to the community. The skewing of Asian Americans of both sexes toward the female side is an index of the entire group's marginalization and its function as the "good natives" in American cultural myth (p. 112).

East Asian men and women are defined according to white ideas of masculinity and femininity. Contrary to Black men, East Asian men do not fit white perceptions of masculinity (smaller build, less facial and body hair and shorter) and are emasculated. East Asian women, on the other hand, do fit Western ideals of femininity (shorter, small build and less body hair). Through this accentuation Asian women are also portrayed as more sexually accessible and mysterious than white women. Within this representation, East Asian women are passive. When East Asian women become active they become a threat due to their mysterious feminine wiles personified in the caricature of the Dragon Lady (see Hoppenstand, 1983). Since femininity is inferiorized in Western society, at the core, the representations of East Asians is a reflection of what is good and bad about whites.

In summary, the narratives surrounding East Asians as peril and model represent the Western dialectic relationship between fear (yellow peril) and jealous admiration (model minority), between the belief in the need to conquer (yellow peril) and to civilize (model minority). Attempts to civilize often mask attempts to conquer, consume and appropriate. The representations of East Asians reveal how within success is the seed of threat and how within admiration lies the seeds of suspicion. Elements of the model minority namely intelligence, a strong work ethic, loyalty, endurance, and patience, also can be indicative of cunning, fanaticism, aggression, self-serving, segregationist and exclusivity. The model dulls the threat of the peril while the peril deals with the success of the model. The use of these narratives to construct race relations reveals how the narratives work in conjunction with each other in shaping white and non-white perceptions of East Asian. The model minority and the yellow peril stereotypes exist as part of the master narrative which is white hegemony. Both function to keep East Asians in "their" place.

CONCLUSION

In the proceeding pages I have given an overview of the literature which shaped my opinions on race prior to and during the data collection process. I attempted to delineate some of the processes by which persons defined as having race are Othered. I discussed the specific racialization of East Asian by analyzing the yellow peril and model minority stereotypes. The basic contention is that race impacts the lives of all individuals in racialized societies regardless of "visibility". The following chapter will address the methodological principles and the methods I used to gather information on how the participants may answer the research question.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to follow many of the principles of ethnography. The primary methods of data collection was ethnographic interviewing and participant observation. Within the parameters of ethnography, the study best can be defined as what Horton (1995), citing the work of John Van Maanen, identifies as a critical tale. Central to critical tales is the recognition of the symbiotic relationship between the researcher and the participants. Horton (1995) distinguishes the critical tale from the "realist tale" of traditional ethnography:

> Realist tales are about the presumably self-contained world of the research site. Critical tales address the connections between the people studied and the researchers. As outsiders, we were also insiders, part of what was studied and necessarily affected and affected by what was found. Critical tales also address the connections between the local and the global (p. 7).

The study also contains elements of what Bannerji (1995) calls a "situated critique" (p. 13). A "situated critique", as Bannerji is using it, does not refer to a methodology *per se* but rather a way of writing about social phenomena. I define this work as a situated critique since I began with my own sense of being in the world. I assumed that the participants as well were not isolated individuals. I then attempted to frame the experiences of the participants as social beings within contexts.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC PROCESS

Ethnography includes a methodology, methods as well as the translated product. The ethnographic process is the systematic attempt to provide a holistic description and interpretation of a culture in native terms (Fetterman, 1989; Spradley, 1979;

Wilcox, 1988, 2nd edition and Wolcott, 1987).[41] Culture in this sense is any socially meaningful category.

What constitutes an ethnography, what defines a good ethnography and how to do an ethnography are highly debated questions (see Clifford, 1988; Geertz, 1988; Spradley, 1979; Fetterman, 1989 and Hammersley, 1992). That being stated, in the data collection process I tried to follow most of Spradley's (1979) guidelines outlined in *The Ethnographic Interview*. I also tried to follow certain principles of ethnography such as arriving at a hypothesis, agenda for interviews, and modes of analysis *in situ* as a consequence of observations and information gathered throughout the ethnographic inquiry (Spindler, 1988, 2nd edition, p. 19). I entered the research project with a research question in mind. I knew how I would answer the research question for myself. However, how the participants would answer the research question and how my answers to the question would change was left open. I also attempted to follow the concurrent principle of ethnography whereby data collection and analysis are done simultaneously.

However, it is important to note that this work cannot be described as an ethnography. Rather, I used tools from ethnography in order to guide the research process. Ethnography is a time consuming, thorough, and exhaustive process of description and interpretation. I do not believe that the present study falls within these guidelines. The intent of the study was not to make repeated observations in a variety of social settings, as indicated by Spradley (1979). In addition, I am focusing on the participants experiences of racialization. However, the participants "culture" encompasses much more than the experience of being racialized. From the onset I did not intend to, nor did I think I could, provide a complete account of their "culture".

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[41] See Agar (1980), pp. 69-77 for a list of the differences between ethnography and other social science research methods.

PRIOR TO DATA COLLECTION

A formal pilot study was not organized as part of the research. However, as part of my program, I completed a mini-research project on the research question. I separately interviewed two participants following ethnographic principles and methods of interviewing. The data was then analyzed and written. From this attempt to put ethnographic principles into practice, I gained a much better understanding of what to look for in participants. I also learned some methods for developing rapport. Most importantly I began to see that the parameters of the study were feasible. Prior to the mini-research project I wondered whether it would be best to limit the research to Korean-Canadians. However, upon completion of the project I saw that focusing on the category East Asian was an appropriate way to gather the information desired.

THE PARTICIPANTS

I chose eight participants out of a total of fifteen possible participants. The participants were mainly found through personal contacts. The participants were strangers to me with the exception of one participant who was an acquaintance. One participant offered himself to be interviewed after hearing about the research.

The participants were selected based on their ethnic heritage, gender, age, willingness to participate in the research and ability to do so.[42] I wanted a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. I also aimed to have an overall gender balance, as well as a woman and a man from each ethnic background. I made a conscious decision to choose participants of majority age. This choice was heavily influenced by my status as a novice researcher. I thought that to get valuable information from youth would require a skilled interviewer. I also wanted to avoid the pitfalls of interviewing youth who may not have thought about or were unable to articulate their thoughts on

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[42] Spradley (1979) lists five criteria for a good informant: 1) thorough enculturation; 2) current involvement; 3) an unfamiliar cultural scene; 4) adequate time and; 5) nonanalytic (see pp. 47-53). Some of the participants did not meet all of the requirements but did excel in specific requirements.

identity. This is based on my general assumption that many youth may not have yet developed a strong sense of their identity.

The participants were either born in or grew up in Canada. Pam, Phoung and Jenny (pseudonyms are used throughout) are 1.5 generation Canadians (immigrated to Canada at an early age). John, Susan, Alan and Lisa[43] are second generation Canadians (the first generation born in Canada) and Mark is a third generation Canadian (his parents were born in Canada). Pam, John and Lisa are of Korean heritage. Susan and Mark are of Japanese heritage. Phoung is of Vietnamese heritage and Alan and Jenny are of Chinese heritage. Five women and three men were interviewed for the study. The participants range in age from late teens to mid twenties.

GAINING CONSENT AND DEVELOPING RAPPORT

Spradley (1979) states that: "Ethnographic interviewing involves two distinct but complementary processes: *developing rapport* and *eliciting information*. Rapport encourages informants to talk about their culture. Eliciting information fosters the development of rapport (p. 78, italics in original)." The rapport process refers to the building of trust between the participants and the researcher (see Spradley, 1979, p. 78-83). Rapport is developed inside and outside the interview and fluctuates and varies over time.

Prior to the first interview the participants signed a prepared consent form (Appendix A). The participants were informed that they could refuse to answer any questions, that we could stop the interview at any time and that a tape recorder was optional. I also made it clear that the participants had the choice to cease participation

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[43] Lisa was not born in Canada but I chose to categorize her as a second generation Canadian since she arrived in Canada before the age of one. To be categorized as a 1.5 generation Canadian/immigrant means that they have experienced immigration albeit to varying degrees. In addition labeling her as a 1.5 generation Canadian also means that her parents have immigrated. Lisa was adopted into a white family as an infant and does not easily fall into any of the above categories.

in the research at any time. The participants were informed that the tapes and transcripts of the interviews would be destroyed upon the completion of the study. The above seemed to ease the apprehension of some of the participants.

Throughout the interviewing process, I also made repeated explanations to the participants regarding project goals, documentation of the study, their role in the study, the purpose of each interview, the questions and their rights as voluntary participants. I attempted to give all explanations without using ambiguous jargon such as culture, ethnography, science or cultural knowledge (see Spradley, 1979, p. 62 and Agar, 1980, pp. 55-56). In the beginning of each interview we spent time getting to know one another or catching up on our lives since we last spoke. Throughout the interview, I tried to listen attentively, show interest and reply in a nonjudgemental manner. After the completion of each interview, I asked if they had any questions or comments, thanked them for their time and asked if I could call for clarifications.

The building of rapport was made easier since each of the participants were reached through personal contacts, thus we already had a mutual connection. In addition, since I am a member of the cultural scene under study, I did not have to spend a great deal of time learning the culturally appropriate ways in which one builds rapport. I already had knowledge of taboo areas, of inappropriate and appropriate social behavior, of dress, of cultural boundaries of humor and so forth (see Haniff, 1985). However, I did have to be sensitive to the particularities of the individuals.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW

All ethnographic methods, processes, and techniques complement each other in the discovery and description process (Fetterman, 1989, p. 72). Ethnography not only purports to describe and interpret a culture holistically, the process itself is holistic. Participant observation and ethnographic interviewing occur simultaneously. Hammersely and Atkinson (1995, 2nd edition) do not see a significant difference between interviewing and participant observation since the contextualization of

descriptions and the building of rapport is essential for both. The authors state that: "Interviews must be viewed as social events in which the interviewer (and for that matter the interviewee) is a participant observer (p. 156)." My role as a participant observer will be discussed in the following section.

Seven out of eight participants were separately interviewed twice for an interview average of two hours each. The second interviews were conducted approximately two months after the first interviews. One of the participants was only interviewed once due to personal circumstances. The participants were interviewed in places they were familiar with in order to allow the participant to relax and to help develop rapport (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 2nd edition, p. 150).

The interviews took the form of an informal ethnographic interview rather than a structured or semi-structured ethnographic interview. Contrary to structured and semi-structured ethnographic interviews (where the researcher has explicit questions he/she wishes to address) informal interviews do not have an explicit agenda and appear to mirror a casual conversation. Although mirroring a casual conversation, informal ethnographic interviews are distinct from casual conversations and require a delicate balance of structure and non-structure (Fetterman, 1989, p. 49).

Rather than having prewritten questions I had categories which I wished to address. Some of the categories included family history, personal identification, involvement with ethnic community and feelings toward intermarriage. How the participants answered each question greatly affected the course of the interviews. The participants directed the interviews as much as I did. The interviews were all very distinct from one another and had their own nuances and characteristics. Following the principles of ethnographic interviewing, in the second interviews, I introduced new questions while restating (in their words) what they had already said. The second interview was a combination of clarifying and/or verifying previously made statements as well as expanding previous statements.

As the interviewing process progressed, I made a choice to become more active in the interviews. Due to my status as a participant observer, some of the participants asked me to share my experiences or validate their experiences. I responded with vague short answers. In the second interview I voiced my opinion while respecting theirs. The second interviews, more so than the first interviews, took the shape of information sharing between the participants and myself. Kirby and McKenna's (1989) description of Oakley's notions of non-exploitative interviews seems applicable here.

> The interviewer interacts with those whose lives are being researched, and records her/his own commentary; in traditional research models, the researcher would not normally be considered a source of information. In Oakley's approach, the interview is a discussion or guided conversation in which both the interviewer and the person being interviewed share information and contribute to the research process (p. 66).

This is contrary to the ethnographic focus on the participants as teachers and the researcher as the student.[44] However, it seemed to me that I was doing a disservice to the work by not sharing my thoughts and opinions with the participants. Hence, in my continual struggle over when and how to be passive or active in the interview, I eventually chose to become a more active participant. I tried to be as direct, honest and as natural as possible without revealing the research question[45] and also without preventing the participants from voicing their views (see Agar, 1980, p. 60). I would state that this choice led to a more equal and respectful relationship with the participants.

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[44] Ethnography with its emphasis on the participants as teachers and the researcher as student advocates an unequal relationship. Clifford (1988) suggests that this can serve as a vehicle to mask the authority and power of the researcher to construct the line of questioning.

[45] See footnote 59 for a discussion of the one exception I made regarding asking a participant the research question.

Ethnographic questions

Spradley (1979) divides ethnographic questions into three main categories: a) descriptive; b) structural; and c) contrast. Structural and contrast questions are asked in conjunction with descriptive questions. Each will be briefly described. I will also list some examples of the questions I asked which fall under the categories.

a) Descriptive Questions

"Descriptive questions form the backbone of all ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979, p. 91)." Descriptive questions invite the participants to discuss the particulars of a cultural scene with which they are familiar. Asking descriptive questions which are broad but answerable are particularly useful in developing rapport and encouraging the participant to talk. Consequently, this gives the researcher a large sample of the participants speech patterns.

Ethnographic interviews generally begin with what Spradley (1979) defines as a grand tour descriptive question and Fetterman (1989) as a survey question. Grand tour questions ask the participant to give a "grand tour" of a location, an experience or a task. I asked the participants to describe the history of their family in Canada.[46] I also asked numerous mini tour questions. Mini tour questions are similar to grand tour questions but cover a smaller unit of experience. I asked a native language descriptive question about how they respond if and when others ask them what they are. This was done in order for me to be able to ask questions using their own identifications. I also asked one of the participants, "...could you tell me about some of the things you do at your church youth meetings? ...". After numerous descriptive questions I began to see some underlying themes and patterns.

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[46] Wolcott (1987) suggests that the novice ethnographer begin with one of two descriptive questions: a) ask participants to recount their life story, and b) invite participants to describe a routine day in their life. Wolcott adds that both approaches help the researcher to see the participant as people rather than ethnographic subjects or objects, that they have contextualized lives where they occupy several roles not only the one(s) the ethnographer may be interested in (p. 49).

b) Structural Questions

While descriptive questions discover the cultural knowledge of the participants, structural question serve to discover how participants organize cultural knowledge. Structural questions address the relational and similarity principles of ethnographic inquiry. Meaning is inferred from how symbols relate and are similar to each other. An example of a structural question that I asked one of the participants was, "...What are some of the places you would go to to be with other Koreans...."

c) Contrast Questions

Contrast questions attempt to elicit meaning by delineating differences between symbols (the contrast principle).[47] In asking contrast questions, the researcher should refrain from asking "why" and "what do you mean" questions. Rather, researchers should ask for use (Spradley, 1979, p. 83). When asked for meaning participants may only be able to provide explicit cultural knowledge leaving tacit knowledge hidden. Asking for meaning also relays to the participant that they have not been clear. "Why" and "what do you mean" questions also asks participants to use their translation competence.

Instead of saying, "What does it mean to you to be Canadian?", I would ask (depending on what they said), "...Would you ever say you are not Canadian, would you say you are Chinese-Canadian...?" I also asked some of the participants what they thought some of the differences were between their relationship with their Asian and Caucasian friends.

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[47] There are five key principles underlying the asking of both structural and contrast questions: concurrent, explanation, repetition, context and cultural framework principle (see Spradley, 1979, pp. 121-124).

I AS A PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

Ethnography is increasingly being used to describe and interpret the cultures of the West by people situated in the West (see Buchignani and Letkemann, 1994). Indigenous[48], native and local anthropology all refer to the exercise of insider research. Ethnography has always been a tool to understand oneself as well as others however; with the "coming home" of ethnography this often implicit and unexplored aspect of research has become explicit (Caplan, 1988, p. 8 and Clifford, 1986, pp. 23-24).[49] Local anthropology is becoming more common; however, it is not without its critics.[50] In discussing Schutz's ethnographic work in social psychology, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, 2nd edition) state that:

> Schutz argues that by virtue of being forced to come to understand a culture in this way [as an outsider], the stranger acquires a certain objectivity not normally available to culture members. The latter live inside the culture, and tend to see it as simply a reflection of 'how the world is'. They are often not conscious of the fundamental presuppositions that shape their vision, many of which are distinctive to their culture (pp. 8-9).

Positions which argue that an insider will see their culture as 'how the world is' are somewhat misleading. If one is a member of the invisible dominant culture one may

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[48] The term "indigenous anthropology" is generally used to refer exclusively to the practice of Third World anthropologists conducting ethnography in Third World countries (see Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984; Haniff, 1985; Shahrani, 1994; Madan, 1982; Cuisenier, 1982 and Driessen, 1993).

[49] The practice of critically engaging the presence of the ethnographer has been termed "reflexivity" (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 2nd edition, chapter one, and Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984).

[50] Argument for and against insider ethnography can be divided into macrostructural and microstrucutral perspectives. Macrostructural arguments focus on questioning ethnographic authority to represent others. Some criticize how anthropology, its theories and methods, can or have been a vehicle for Western cultural and political hegemony (see Clifford, 1988 and 1986; Madan, 1982; Wellman, 1994; Caplan, 1984; Trinh, 1991; hooks, 1990; Fabian, 1983; Gubrium and Silverman, 1989; Geertz, 1988 and Sörbö, 1982. For a critique of these works, particularly that of Clifford's, see Wolf, 1992). Microstructural arguments focus on the validity and worth of and considerations encountered in obtaining information from a non-traditional anthropological process - that of studying a cultural scene which the ethnographer is a part. Elements of detachment, objectivity, knowledge of emotive force of meaning, translation competence, rapport and acceptance into a community are discussed (see Spindler, 1988, 2nd edition; Spradley, 1979; Agar, 1980; Fetterman, 1989; Berg, 1989; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984; Rosaldo, 1984 and Haniff, 1985).

have a tendency to see one's culture as universal. However, I think that as a person who grew up aware of two very distinct cultures, Korean culture (or at least that of my parents' generation) and of Western Canadian culture, I often see cultural practices as specific. Researchers who belong to an Othered group may have a unique perspective that researchers from the dominant perspective do not have access to.

Furthermore, the categories of insider and outsider are not stable. Within Korean and Western Canadian culture I am both an insider and an outsider depending on context. In the research, I was an insider in terms of racial visibility, however, I also occupied the position of outsider in relation to ethnicity, gender, religion, class, and educational background. Clifford (1988) states that, "A "culture" is, concretely, an open-ended, creative dialogue of subcultures, of insiders and outsiders, of diverse factions (p. 46)."

Sörbö (1982) defines the primary advantage of an indigenous ethnographer as, "...an intuitive comprehension of the sense of the system... (p. 154)." Intuition comprises a major element of the ethnographic process (Wolcott, 1995, p. 97). Rosaldo (1984) and Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) point out that insiders have the advantage of understanding the force and significance of the emotional content and meaning which coincides with cultural descriptions. Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) states that the addition of emotional and psychological behavior (which are particularly difficult for an outsider to understand) in ethnographic work would contribute greatly to the social sciences. She contends that, "Native anthropologists are in a position to offer intimate knowledge of these dimensions of human behavior and to make a great contribution not simply to our ethnographic knowledge but to theoretical treatments of human behavior (p. 595)." I did find that I have had some similar experiences as the other participants. I think that in some cases the participants would not have divulged certain information about sensitive topics if it was not for the assumption that I may understand.

George and Louise Spindler (1987) also note that the second hand nature of a lot of ethnographic information affects validity (p. 20). In this case the chances of both the participant and myself having first hand knowledge are increased. Ohnuki-Tierney (1984), in citing the work of Vincent Crapanzano, also states that participants are more likely to perform in the presence of an outsider relative to an insider. Thus the validity of information gathered is compromised. Crapanzano believes that an ethnography is not the reality of the informants or the anthropologist but the negotiated reality between the two (p. 585). Hence, it can be postulated that insider ethnography, being the negotiated reality of people within a similar cultural scene, can better articulate the reality of the participants. In addition, it may have been easier for me to develop rapport and elicit information since the participants may have assumed that my interest in their thoughts was personal as well as academic.

My ability to be "objective" depended greatly on my ability to listen and dialogue with the participants. In this respect I had a decided advantage since I was familiar with the dialogue and knew how to dialogue. "Objectivity" was dependent on my ability to see the participants as well as myself within specific contexts. I used ethnographic principles such as making repeated explanations, asking for use rather than meaning, and asking descriptive questions to gather participant use of language in order to assist me in this process.

Researchers all have strengths and limitations arising from personal, cultural and structural factors. One cannot replace a traditional belief in the supremacy of "neutral" outsider interpretations of the natives with a new axiom that professes only the validity and authenticity of insiders knowledge of themselves (Sörbö, 1982, p. 156). Clifford (1986) states:

> Insiders studying their own cultures offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways. The diverse post- and neo-colonial rules for ethnographic practice do not necessarily encourage "better" cultural accounts. The criteria for judging a good account have never been settled and are changing (p. 9).

However, I do believe that the description and interpretation of culture is a political act. Local anthropology may be a potential source of political empowerment which may reduce the power differentials between the researcher and the participants. Sörbö (1982) views insider anthropology as "...a necessary corrective for the unconscious ethnocentric projections found in much anthropology (p. 156)."[51] In addition, it appears to me that a researcher who has lived similar experiences is more suited to understanding the complexity of the experiences under study.

ANALYSIS

The process of data collection is not distinct and does not occur separate from the process of analyzing data. Ethnography is a continual process of formulation, verification and reformulation. Thus the analysis, in some form began as soon as I contacted the participants. Throughout the research process, I wrote down my thoughts, feelings, and apprehensions, about the research. Each time I contacted a participant I wrote down what I thought and felt. Upon completion of an interview I wrote down my thoughts and feelings regarding specific comments they had made, how I perceived them and how I perceived the interaction with the participant. I then transcribed the interviews verbatim and referenced the material.

After the first interviews were completed and transcribed I began to look for similarities and differences in statements. I attempted to follow some of the principles and guidelines involved in doing a domain analysis (as outlined by Spradley, 1979). A domain is "Any symbolic category that includes other categories... (Spradley, 1979, p. 100)." I tried to find the symbols the participants seemed to place value in, the relationship between the symbols, in what context and possible reasons why. My main tactic of analyzing the data upon completion of the first interviews was to try to

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[51] However, Sörbö (1982) cautions against the uncritical acceptance of ethnographic theories since ethnocentrism may be imbedded within the methodology as well as the methodologist (p. 156).

find the categories the participant felt excluded from or included in. My rationale was that racism is a form of exclusion. I wanted to know how the individuals defined certain categories in relation to themselves.

However, upon completion of the second interviews I found that attempting to do a domain analysis was not feasible for the constraints of the study. It proved to be too time consuming and meticulous a task (see Wolcott, 1995, p. 88). I also did not think that I had the necessary data to do a thorough domain analysis. However, it was a starting point and I found it to be extremely helpful in the analysis process. I eventually decided to frame the analysis under three main questions: "Who am I? To whom or what am I related? And What power do I and people like me exercise (Underleider, 1996, p. 11)?" I think these questions offer a succinct way to organize, present and interpret the data. I then reexamined the data, broke it down into distinct parts, looked for similarities and differences, asked myself questions about the statements and tried to continually explore my experiences, assumptions and bias'.[52]

In analyzing the data I also chose to specify the speaker as much as possible. Although I intended to contextualize the information I thought much of the information could be generalized. I had not anticipated the degree of difference between the participants, therefore, I chose to highlight certain aspects of each participants interviews that placed them separate from the other participants. I also wanted to avoid the power dynamics involved in giving generalized information.[53] Although the premise of my work was the salience of the group East Asian, I also wanted to emphasize that each individual, as well as myself, has various ways of seeing, acting and being themselves in various categories.

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[52] This is very similar to what Strauss and Corbin (1990) define as "open coding". However, I was not familiar with the work until after the analysis was finished.

[53] Clifford (1988) states that: "Ethnographers have generally refrained from ascribing beliefs, feelings, and thoughts to individuals. They have not, however, hesitated to ascribe subjective states to cultures (p. 47)." It is this act of homogenizing a group which I wanted to avoid.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCURACY

In order to provide anonymity I gave each participant a pseudonym which was analogous to their real name in ethnic origin. I also changed some facts about their life and experiences. In order to ensure third party privacy, I altered portions of quotes which involved family and friends. I used verbatim quotes in order to improve accuracy. Three dots (...) were used, a) when the recording did not come out clearly on tape and the participant was unsure of what they said, or b) when I deleted portions of their statement because they used almost exactly the same words prior to the deleted portion and, c) in order to ensure anonymity. I also tried to contextualize their comments by providing the question which lead to the comment and/or by providing what they said prior to and after the point which I am addressing. This may enable the reader to better access my interpretations. Most importantly, I attempted to give a copy of the portions of the analysis in which I discussed the participant to each participant. I was unable to reach one of the participants however, the other participants have verified the quotes for accuracy and reconfirmed their willingness to continue participation in the study.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

One of the most obvious limitations is that I am of Korean ancestry. I did find that I felt that I had a better understanding of the participants who were also of Korean heritage. These participants, more so than the other participants, also seemed to assume that I was familiar with some of their experiences (particularly within the family). This is not a limit in the sense that I did choose to have participants of various ethnicities, however, my ethnicity is a limit. I was also limited in access to potential participants.

I found the participants through personal contacts and willingness to participate. Since I am a university student, many of my personal contacts are also university students. In addition, I found it difficult to find participants in the age range who were

not attending or had not attended a post-secondary institution. Several of the possible participants were not presently students but had graduated from a post-secondary institution. One possible participant had chosen to not further her education beyond high school, however, I did not think that she would make a good participant due to what I perceived as a lack of ability to articulate her thoughts on identity. Of the participants chosen, three of the eight participants have completed their Bachelors degrees and four are in the process of doing so.

Another limit of the research was the amount of time I had to interview the participants and the lack of variety in places in which I interacted with them. Since my approach was to see the participants as individuals within a social context, I believe the research would have been enhanced if I had spent more time with them in a variety of social contexts. When I went to give them portions of the analysis in which they appeared, I spent more time with several of the participants in coffee shops and in their homes. For one of the participants, I was shocked to find out, if her home is of any indication, how wealthy her family is. Therefore, in this case I was unaware of what I would consider an important contextual element.

I wondered throughout the research, as I still do, whether I should have limited the characteristics of the research participants more. Besides ethnicity, I did not choose to limit the research to a particular generation of Canadians. In addition, I chose a participant who was adopted. As a novice researcher, the ramifications of my decisions are still unclear to me since I have no experiences with which to compare. However, I think that depending on one's perspective, this factor can both increase and decrease the validity and generalizability of the findings (this will be discussed further in the final chapter).

CONCLUSION

The methodology for this study generally follows certain principles of and used tools from ethnography. In so doing, my role as a participant observer greatly affected

the research. The study started with my experiences which lead to the broad question of, "How does one's visibility as an East Asian affect one's self identity." In order to seek answers to this question I interviewed eight participants of various backgrounds. I began with the belief that different people experience the world differently (see Kirby and McKenna, 1989). I then tried to find who the participants thought they were and in what contexts. I approached each participant, as well as myself, as individuals as well as members of social categories. I tried to see which categories they accepted, when, and some possible reasons why. The relationship between race and the choice of categories was of particular concern. The following chapter contains the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data: A Presentation and Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Underleider (1996) contends that: "Every Canadian -- regardless of origin -- asks three questions: Who am I? To whom or what am I related? And What power do I and people like me exercise (p. 11)?" This chapter will look at how the participants viewed the relationship between race and the above three questions. I attempt to answer the question, "How does one's visibility as an East Asian affect one's self identity" by looking at the experiences of the participants as individuals, as members of an ethnic group, as representatives of the racial group of East Asian and as Canadians. Thus I will be looking at the relationship between individual identities and social identities. Which groups did the participants feel they belonged to, in what context and why? What are the relationships between individual choice and social enforcement? And what mechanisms did the participants employ in order to deal with their racial visibility?

WHO AM I ?

Unlike white Canadians, visible minorities are often asked to define who they are, what they are, and where they are from in relation to an ethnic/national origin which is not Canadian. Therefore, I attempted to find out how the participants identified themselves, in part, by asking them how they answered these questions for others who ask.

Phoung is of Vietnamese heritage and defines herself for others as Vietnamese. Jenny usually defines herself as Vietnamese-Canadian. For both participants, the fact that they were born in Vietnam seems to be a relevant factor. Phoung stated that out of all her siblings, "I think I'm the only true Vietnamese person cause I was born in Vietnam [8.1.(10)]." Although Jenny is of Chinese heritage she stated:

> I usually say I am Vietnamese-Canadian. I was born in Vietnam but was brought up with a lot of Chinese values...but I would put Vietnamese before Canadian because I know where I'm born from.... But still I would say that I'm Canadian too but I still say that I'm Vietnamese first.... If you're not born in China you can't say you're Chinese... [1.1.(3)].

For Phoung and Jenny their strong identification with their heritage also may have much to do with their parents. Out of all the participants, Phoung and Jenny in particular (as will be discussed later), seemed to struggle with the cultural differences between themselves and their parents and between their parents and the wider society.

Phoung and Jenny also revealed their feelings about being Canadian. Shortly after proclaiming her pride and acknowledgment of where she is from, Jenny accentuated her association with Canada and Canadians.

> Well it all depends. If a Caucasian will ask me I will always say I am Canadian cause I feel Canadian. I am very Canadian. But when it comes to like family or somebody that's Oriental, I will say Vietnamese-Canadian cause they want to know what origin I am from. But I feel more Canadian than ever. I have been brought up because I was pretty young when I came here so I would characterize myself as Canadian but it depends on who I'm talking to [1.1.(5)].

Jenny feels pride in her roots but also emphasized that she is Canadian especially for Caucasians. Although Phoung is quite comfortable defining herself as Vietnamese for people who ask, when I asked her whether she feels like she belongs to a certain community, people, nation, culture, etc. she stated:

> I don't feel like I belong. I don't know, I don't feel like I am truly Vietnamese cause I don't truly practice my religion or whatever. Yet I don't truly feel Canadian cause it seems like you are always being noticed as being Asian. You can't, people can never truly accept you as being Canadian. You don't know where you belong in terms of ethnic origin like what are you [5.2.(46)].

Phoung revealed the connections between race, ethnicity and nationality. Phoung is a person of Vietnamese heritage who grew up in Canada but what also appears to be

important to others is that she is Asian. Therefore, Phoung, stated that, at times, she does not want people to see her as Vietnamese.

> Sometimes you don't want them to see you. When you do want them to see you as a Vietnamese it's because you want them to realize you are proud of your nationality. And yet you don't want them to see you as that cause you want to be a part of them. You don't want to be discriminated from them [5.2.(71)].

Phoung specified that "them" in this case means Caucasians. Hence both Phoung and Jenny revealed that a desire to be seen as Canadian is, in part, due to discrimination which arises from being seen by Caucasians as part of the group East Asian.

In contrast to Phoung and Jenny, John, Susan, Mark and Alan were born in Canada. Susan, Mark and John recognized the importance of knowing and being proud of their origins. Yet, they primarily defined themselves as Canadian. Susan, who has traveled to Japan several times, stated that she feels like she is Canadian, "Cause I can't relate to the Japanese lifestyle. It's a lot different from the Canadian lifestyle. I did not live long enough in Japan to experience schooling or the family life there. I think my parents kind of moved towards the Canadian ways [4.2.(2)]." Mark stated that he experienced "extreme culture shock" when he was in Japan and defines himself (and his family) as "very assimilated". Unlike the other participants, Mark's parents were both born in Canada and spent part of their childhood in internment camps during W.W.II. Mark stated that "...when they got out they had to face a lot of racism and they had to give up their culture." He went on to state:

> As I've gotten older, I've, my desire to retain some of my culture has um increased. And when I said the war never affected me I guess that was kind of a lie. The only thing that the war has affected me was from a cultural standpoint. Because like I said, I think my family tried to assimilate cause they wanted people to think that they were "good Canadians." And so I never had an opportunity to learn a lot of my culture. And when I was young I really didn't care.... Now it is an issue so that's why I'm taking it in school and I've traveled to Japan [4.1.(51)].

In a similar vein, John stated that "...my parents made a conscious effort to not teach me Korean or speak Korean to me at home [3.1.(34)]." They did so believing this would enhance his educational development. However, in contrast to Susan and Mark, who do not appear to see significant cultural differences between themselves and other Canadians, John repeatedly stated that cultural differences do exist between him and his white friends due to his Korean heritage.

> Well it should be easy to answer but um like Koreans, international students, always ask me what do you think of yourself cause they are curious to know how second generation feels. I mean I am Canadian I think that's the first thing that pops to mind. Then there is always that hyphen you know Korean-Canadian. But for the most part it's Canadian and then of Korean heritage. If that's what you're looking for it's Canadian first and then whatever heritage I have but ya [3.1.(31a)].

John went on to state: "Like I consider myself Canadian both politically speaking and citizenship wise but. And even identity I'm a Canadian but if you want to talk about my personality or culture it's not Canadian. You know it's more of a mix... [3.1(31b(i))]."

Alan's father immigrated to Canada in his teens and his mother immigrated as a child. Similar to John, Susan and Mark, Alan sees himself as being Canadian however; he primarily defines himself as Chinese for those who ask.

> Well I say, a lot of people ask me where I'm born so I just tell them I was born here. If they ask me what am I? I would say I'm Chinese and if they ask, I don't always make a point of saying I was born here, I'm Chinese but I was born here. I don't always, it really depends on who I'm talking to. If I'm talking to someone whose being offensive and just assuming I might say I was born here and I know what goes on here and what it's like here.... Um if it's a person that is just curious I would say ya, I'm Chinese cause they are just curious. Um because I'm not assuming that they don't think I was born here. So I don't get offended... [7.1.(33a)].

Alan seemed aware that other people might find these questions offensive. In addition, Alan is aware that some people see him as different. He mentioned that

prospective employers may see him as "different" and some employers may want someone "different." I asked Alan whether he saw himself as "different".

> No I don't. I don't but I sometimes think other people do just because they think they have this sort of image because of the way, being a visible minority. Like as opposed to like Jewish people are minorities but you can't always tell.... But you can tell a Chinese person just from the physical characteristics. Sometimes I think that people see you as different overall. You are a different type of person just because you are Chinese. You have different qualities then let's just say a white person. I don't think I do but I think that some other people think that I am.... I shouldn't say all encompassing not because there are in terms of customs and all that tradition. I'm open to that so I'm different in that sense. But in terms of a personality, I don't think that I have a different personality... I don't see that type of difference [7.1.(32)].

Alan appears to define himself as Chinese due to a combination of pride in his background and confidence in being seen as a Canadian. Alan does so due to a belief that people often assume he is Canadian. Alan thinks people are curious about his origins and he does not usually get defensive about what he sees as generally innocent curiosities. Alan also recognized that much of this curiosity is due to his visible difference.

Part of Alan's comfort with the questions of "where are you from" may be due to the fact that he is of Chinese heritage. Therefore, Alan identifies himself with what people assume he is. Who he is, is also part of one of the largest minority groups in Canada. People often do not ask me where I am from, they ask me, "are you from China" or "are you Chinese". At times strangers also immediately start talking to me in Cantonese or Mandarin. Phoung made several statements, often out of the blue or not apparently directly related to the flow of the interview, about her annoyance with people's assumptions that she is Chinese.

> I think that often when people look at me they think that I am Chinese. When you think of Oriental like Asian Oriental people tend to generalize it into one word and that's Chinese. It's like Chinese people are so dominant and that makes me really mad cause I just think I'm not Chinese I'm Vietnamese and there is a difference. And people are like what's the difference you know.... Of everything they can assume

> they assume Chinese cause everything is so Chinese-oriented. It seems like out of the Oriental community Chinese is the most popular and Vietnamese is like minority. And yet the stereotype is on the Vietnamese people cause there are so many Vietnamese gangs here [8.1.(42)].

Susan also revealed that she is aware of the association between East Asian and Chinese. Although Susan knew I was of Korean heritage she asked me: "He thought that I was from Japan and I was working like visiting and I don't want people to think that. I'm Canadian and I'm not like a visa student. Do you want people to know that you are Canadian and that you are not from China (laughs) [6.1.(35)]?" Therefore, Chinese has taken on the form of a racial as well as an ethnic category. Phoung stated that she is "always being noticed as being Asian [5.2.(46)]." She also noted that Asian generally means Chinese which she is not. For Alan, it may appear to him that he is being identified primarily through a (visible) ethnic heritage; however, for non-Chinese East Asians, it may be more clear that one is often primarily identified through race.

Contrary to Alan, Lisa and Pam both showed signs that they do find the questions of "what are you" and "where are you from" offensive or at least annoying. When I asked Lisa how she responds to these questions, she stated in an annoyed tone of voice:

> When I was younger I used to say Canadian and they would go no no I mean your race. I would say oh Asian, what part of Asia, oh none of your business. And then as I grew older I said Korean cause I knew what they meant right away instead of going through the whole explanation. Now I say I'm Korean-Canadian, Canadian-Korean cause they are going to say I am pretty Canadian. On the outside I'm totally Korean obviously but on the inside I'm totally Canadian almost [2.1.(8)].

For Pam she stated that lately she finds the questions of "where are you from" and "what are you" "offensive".

> When people ask me what are you or where are you from before, I mean four or five years before I would have said Korean.... I actually

> didn't mind doing it, the question wouldn't have bothered me. And now a days it's like oh that question. If someone asked me what are you I'd be very very offended. But I would still answer Korean. Cause I still feel first and foremost Korean even though I've only spent three years of my life there. Even though I'm a Canadian citizen I feel I identify more strongly with Korean. Well, when I was traveling last year um the identification with Canadian heritage, Canadian culture was stronger just because there were other non-Canadians. When you are in Canada you try to differentiate yourself [5.1.(14)].

Lisa and Pam were both born in Korea. Pam was adamant that she never uses a hyphenation. She defines herself as Korean when she is in Canada and as Canadian when she is abroad. Pam does define herself as "pretty Westernized' but stated:

> At first I would say I am Korean strictly because of a visual difference, a visible difference between me and other Canadians. I don't know maybe it's kind of superficial but... I think that also with the rising of the stature of the Korean nation it makes me feel a bit more pride being a part of it [5.1.(16)].

In contrast to Alan, who appears to define himself as Chinese, in part, due to a belief in being seen as Canadian, Pam's assertions in her "Koreanness" seem to be directed towards an awareness of her inability to define herself as, and be seen as, Canadian. Pam stated that lately she thinks about her identity a great deal but does not know why. She went on to answer her own question.

> Maybe it's because when I was traveling last year I had a lot of people say oh where are you from. That's expected cause you are traveling. I would say Canada and people would say oh but you don't look Canadian. And then you know that got me thinking what do they think a Canadian looks like. Can I really be a Canadian [5.1.(47)]?

Besides these experiences overseas, Pam also noted that experiences in Canada have fueled her desire to accentuate her Koreanness, her difference which she now defines as superiority.

> Now getting back to that point before. It's um covert, not racism per se, but certainly different perceptions maybe negative perceptions... In school I don't know why I mean like I said that I'm thinking about either going to Calgary or Vancouver. And he said well he's going to

> Calgary and for sure I'd rather stay here than going to Vancouver right. But I wonder why. We all know...that Vancouver is like a quarter Oriental right. And he is my colleague but because he thinks like that... That kind of disturbed me. And little incidences like that kind of strike at my desire to be more Canadian and feeds my other desire to be more Korean, more different, more superior in that sense [5.1.(61)].

Lisa, on the other hand, defines herself as Korean-Canadian or Canadian-Korean. She said that at times she feels like she is half Canadian, a quarter Korean and a quarter Chinese since she speaks and understand more Chinese than she does Korean. For Lisa, much of her ambiguity seemed to be due to the fact that she was internationally adopted as an infant into a white family. Therefore, Korean for her is not represented by parents and family. Although born in Korea, Lisa is not completely sure that she is Korean. Unlike some of the participants, Lisa stated that she did not have to deal with the cultural differences between her and her parents. However she has to deal with other things.

> It wasn't that bad for me cause my parents so the norms are the same. I came here when I was less than a year so it wasn't a big deal. The thing that I had to put up with is, I didn't have an accent, I didn't dress differently, I didn't look any different other than race and that's what I had to put with. And it wasn't a hatred it's just children can be cruel type of thing... so I was fighting because of that but after a while ... we grew up together and so we all became friends [2.1.(13a)].

For Lisa, part of what seemed to affect how she defines herself for others is her full Anglo name, Lisa Jones. After I stated that I found it difficult to have a non-Caucasian name, Lisa stated:

> I always wanted an Asian name because when you say, when you call someone their first name... I have no accent, my name is completely Caucasian like Canadian and then I walk through the door and just that's something I can do without is that look of surprise. It's not that they are looking down on me or anything I just know the questions are going to come. I wish I had a sign saying, Yes, I'm adopted, no my father is not my husband, no my father is not cradle robbing. So, I always somehow make sure that they know. I don't know how but I

> make sure.[54] Or how is Korea what is it like, you're the expert [2.1.(7)].

Lisa repeatedly discussed how she does not fit into people's perceptions of who she should be, both here and in Korea. When I asked Lisa if she was ever ashamed of being Korean, she relayed her experiences in Korea:

> I admit when I was younger I used to wish I wasn't Asian. That it would save a lot of hassle ... you know that look of what are you doing. And then when I was in Korea the look of how come I'm speaking to you in Korean and you're not responding and I have to look at these big white people and they are giving more response to me than you are. I had to wear a big tag that I didn't speak Korean. No I didn't but over time they would look at me. I was with my parents...and it was always me they would talk to always always call me.... I ended up staying in the hotel room the whole time... now I don't wish I wasn't, sometimes I wish I was a guy you know but its not so much I want to get a way out of it. More personality like I wish I could change this or that... it's not that I love being Asian and I wouldn't want to be anything but. I've accepted it sort of whatever can't do anything about it go on with life [2.1.(47)].

Similar to Pam and Lisa, I went through a phase where I found the questions of "what are you" and "where are you from" annoying at the least and at times very offensive. How I responded depended greatly on context. Even if I stated that I was Korean I would make sure that they also knew that I thought I was from Edmonton or Canada. When I described myself as Korean I reluctantly did so and considered it to be a belittlement of my identity and experiences. I did and still do see myself as encompassing many Korean cultural characteristics and I did not want to deny my Korean heritage. Nor did I want to blend in and be seen as the same, as Canadian. Like Phoung, at times I wanted my difference acknowledged and at other times I did not. To be seen as the same negates my experiences of being an immigrant and growing up in an immigrant family. It negates the relationship between race and

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[54] One of the first things Lisa said to me when we first talked on the phone was, "You know that I'm adopted right?"

ethnicity. Defining myself as Korean, Canadian or Korean-Canadian also does not address the fact that I have an identity composed of both Korean and Western Canadian culture while I believe that I am not fully accepted in either society. Likewise, to be seen as culturally different due to my Korean heritage also negates all of the above experiences. After a reasonable amount of work in this area, I no longer get as offended as I did before. I think that this is in large part due to an awareness that, although many differences exist, there are a group of people (beyond family) who have had similar experiences.

TO WHOM OR WHAT AM I RELATED?

The majority of the participants relayed their experiences of being defined and treated as the group "Asian", "East Asian" or "Oriental". The participants believed that East Asians are perceived by non-Asians as a homogenous group. When I asked Lisa whether she thought that people treated her differently beyond the initial "shock" due to her name, she stated:

> Um huh ya. They treat me like ... not as an individual but as a group. They treat me like a group. They treat me like an Asian. They are afraid of them. They are afraid of me. If they think of Asian they will look at me and when they have a math problem. I'll just look at them straight back at them like what. You can't really do much about it [2.1.(39)].

All of the participants recognized that there are certain images of East Asians. On the "positive" side the participants recognized that East Asians are seen as being smart, studious, rich, respectful and in Alan's words "like a model citizen" [2.2.(12)]. On the "negative" side, the participants thought East Asians are seen to be violent, exclusionary, money-hungry, ignorant and foreign. However, most of the participants disliked being stereotyped in general, regardless of whether the stereotype appeared to be positive or negative. Individual stereotypes were also deemed both positively and negatively.

East Asians as smart, upwardly mobile and passive: elements of the model minority

All of the participants pointed out that East Asians are seen as smart (particularly in math). Lisa pointed to the fact that because she is associated with a group, her high mark in math was not perceived to be the accomplishments of an individual but an essential characteristic of a group.

> And that when you can't live up to it it's even worse. It's like you don't even belong to that group. You're a nobody..... And I got it in junior high and I think that my math mark was only 80 and isn't it supposed to be 99 or something? Aren't you supposed to be really smart in math? You know like it doesn't make you feel at all good. Even if you get the high marks it's like oh ya well that's nothing great. You feel like all right I worked my butt off and it was expected so I hated that [2.1.(25)].

Phoung stated that the stereotype makes her angry. After asking Phoung whether she was ever ashamed of being Vietnamese, she stated that: "I'm intelligent but math is my absolute worst subject and that's the thing. I'm never ashamed but the stereotype that goes along with it doesn't really fit with me sometimes because of different things. And that makes me angry but I'm not ashamed [5.2.(16)]." Alan referred to incidences at school where teachers assumed he would win numerous academic awards although they had no experiences with him to dictate such a perception. He found it embarrassing when he was with a group of his friends (mostly white) and he would be the only person singled out as being smart. Alan added that, "...there is a point you are embarrassed sometimes if this person thinks you are at a certain level. You don't want to disappoint that person, shatter that image [2.2.(18)]."

Jenny stated that the idea that East Asians are smart has put a lot of pressure on her "to be what you're not [1.1.(33b)]." When I asked whether the pressure to be smart comes mainly from her family or elsewhere Jenny stated:

> Um as in my family it's just cause my parents want me to have a better life. But as in everybody else, like teachers, they just think that we are smart to start with. You know that stupid thing of how Orientals are good in math. I hate that cause I was awful in math. I never applied myself. I don't know cause they think that we're naturally smarter

> which is like weird cause sometimes they think we're incompetent in certain things.... Like English I don't know I find that cause your Oriental you shouldn't be good in English....But generally they think that we are smarter people [1.1.(36)].

Thus Jenny recognized that the idea of East Asians being smart is qualified. Jenny was the only participant who has not or is not attending a post-secondary institution. She, more so than the other participants, emphasized the difficulty she has with the stereotype that East Asians are smart.

In stating that the participants did not like being stereotyped as intrinsically smart does not mean that they did not strive to or feel pressure to further their education. Phoung wants to become a doctor in order to please her parents. She believes that her parents have much higher expectations of her than most East Asian parents who also have high expectations. It appears as if the participants do not appreciate the stereotype of the educationally successful Asian but did appreciate, or at least respect, their parents emphasis on education. Alan, whose siblings along with himself, are all academically successful, recognized that a lot of East Asian parents put pressure on their children to succeed academically. However, he also stated that:

> I don't see it as much pressure maybe there is some pressure there but I don't see it as just pressure. I can see it in their eyes as they want the best for us as well. They want us to be happy and they've encouraged us. They haven't forced us or anything but they have encouraged us to do the best as we can, to do well in school and learn and be rewarded in the end type of thing [7.1.(5a)].

Pam and her siblings are also all academically successful. The pressure to succeed in Pam's family appears to be more extreme.

> ...especially when we moved here my father was quite authoritative which I thought was typical of a Korean father. Um he always...uh drilled education, as I think every Korean parents does in your head. I think even when my older brother was in grade two or grade three my parents well he made an agreement that he would become a doctor when he was older. So I think from that age we always, they had made something of his life now that you're here [5.1.(9)].

However, Pam did not appear to show signs that this troubled her. This may, in part, be due to her understanding that pressure for academic success exists as much, if not more, in Korea than in Canada. Korean society is dictated by extreme competition to get into university. However, when one does graduate from a respectable university one is generally ensured of a secure job. A university degree in Korea is analogous to security to an extent which does not exist in Canada. In addition, security, more so than emotional fulfillment, is highly valued. This desire to emphasize success in school becomes warped when it is transferred into another society which judges other cultures through ethnocentrism and racism.

For me, I did feel a great deal of pressure to graduate from university (not college). However, I also knew that if I chose not to go to university, my parents would come to accept it as long as I was content. I also thought that it was better to have high expectations placed on me rather than low expectations. In my case, being female, my family has also started to wonder when I will stop going to school. The problem being that they believe that I may be educating myself out of a husband and children. Therefore, for women in Korean culture, there is a limit to how much education one should receive. None of the above bothers me. What I find troubling is that when I discuss my desire and my parents' desire for me to succeed to a non-East Asian person, I often feel that they see and treat me as the disempowered passive East Asian who is caged and oppressed by familial obligations and expectations.

Another aspect of the educationally successful East Asian is that East Asians are upwardly mobile. The yellow peril counterpart is the money-hungry, ruthless East Asian. Alan, Mark and John all commented on the idea that East Asians are seen to have money. Mark used it to make his point that stereotypes exist for every group in society.

> They treat white people the same way in Toronto at least they do. They say white people are dumb racist. [4.1.(30)]... In Toronto you can't go anywhere that's predominately white in Toronto. White people are dumb, ignorant, racist. Asians are smart they have money [4.1.(31)].

In discussing the novel, *Native Speaker*, by Chang-Rae Lee, about Korean-Americans, John stated:

> They drive their crappy car into the city like the bad neighbourhoods to work and they all own a Cadillac which they take out on Sundays just to show off. Material symbols of you've made it so to speak. I think that's more what it is [rather than money-hungry]. They, especially Koreans, are looking for material recognition. Maybe... by getting all the material symbols of the establishment sort of thing you feel that you have sort of have made it. I think that that's an immigrant mentality not specifically Asian or Korean. Like the American dream you've made it, you are an American, you are a Canadian, you are part of the establishment so to speak when you have all these [3.2.(10)].

Shortly after, John also discussed his interpretation of why Koreans are accused of being socially passive.

> They are here for a purpose. And the purpose is a better life for their kids or to make money and that's what they concentrate on. If they get treated bad or whatever they don't like it but sometimes I think getting socially active or putting things back to the community, which is a lot of the complaints against Koreans, to a Korean storeowner is basically a waste of resources. Because your primary purpose is money, kids and family and whatever so they concentrate on that and everything else is you know extra it's unneeded you know [3.2.(14b)].[55]

As well as being socially passive, East Asians are seen as passive in general. When I asked Alan whether he saw any differences between himself and his friends, Alan responded by saying:

> I think that there are people who think we are different. ...In terms of personality maybe they sort of people think that you are not as have a different personality than white people. You might not be as talkative, not as outgoing, not as crazy as some non-Asian people. I think that's why you see some Asian people try to not be themselves and try to be

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[55] Okihiro (1994) discusses how it is a fallacy that Asian-Americans are socially passive. He states numerous historical examples where Asian-Americans have fought for their rights and the rights of others. Although Okihiro is relaying American history, I wonder to what extent have the examples of when East Asian-Canadians fought for their rights been ignored in history books. I generally agree with what John has stated but I also know that the Korean community in Edmonton is quite political. Therefore, I wonder whether both John and I have internalized this stereotype of East Asians as socially passive (even in the face of contradictory information).

> like a white person. They feel they have to be loud and party and not be themselves and I don't agree with that... just be yourself.... And I really notice that when people, they try to be somebody else. But on the one hand they are not that person and at the same time they don't want to be that person. But are still trying to be that person to try to satisfy somebody else to try and fit a stereotype or to escape a certain stereotype. There is a difference if you really want to be that person and you are comfortable doing it [2.2.(15)].

Alan highlights how when people are associated with images, energy is spent in denying and affirming these stereotypes. For some visible minorities it may be difficult to "just be yourself" outside of social expectations.

The Asian gang/Asians in "gangs": elements of the yellow peril

Another stereotype of East Asians that was commonly discussed was the idea that East Asians hang out in exclusive groups which may take the form of violent gangs. John alluded to the Asian gang stereotype.

> People assume they have certain ideas about you. I'm sure if I have gel in my hair and wore black leather jacket and was smoking a Marlboro outside Club Rio or something. It's funny. I find it funny to sort of question just think about other peoples' perceptions. Like I'm at a bar or something and some kid will bump into me and he'll be apologizing left and right kind of thing cause he's afraid that I'll pull out a meat cleaver. You know just little things like that I find just hilarious. Like those things are more ego massaging then if I get bad service. I don't know. They are humorous [3.1.(66)].[56]

Phoung, being Vietnamese, discussed the upsetting effect of the Asian gang stereotype. She related it to how it could or does affect her boyfriend, her brother, her cousin and in turn her. Phoung went on in some length about the media's irresponsible portrayal of Asians (particularly Vietnamese) as all being gang members.

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[56] In this instance, John mixes the stereotype of Asians as gang members with the Hollywood caricature of the crazy but comical Chinese chef.

However, when we discussed whether she would ever move to Vancouver for a job she claimed that:

> Well being as how I get uncomfortable just walking through Tory, the atrium, I don't think I could live in an area like that where so many Asians and I know that there are a lot of Asian crimes too. And um it wouldn't be scary to live there but I don't know [5.2.(38)].

The stereotype of Asian gangs endangering society affects Phoung and she seems to think that it would be heightened in Vancouver. But it is also the negative connotation to Asians cohorting in a "gang" which seems to affect her a great deal.

a) East Asians as immigrants and foreigners

Susan's identity is largely based on trying to deny her association with groups of Asians specifically immigrants and foreigners. Immigrants, foreigners, E.S.L. students and tourists appear to be a threat to Susan's identity as a Canadian. Susan highlights the differences between her and immigrants and foreigners and the similarities between her and Canadians. In noticing these differences between herself and immigrants and foreigners, Susan consciously acted to be unlike them. She said: "I noticed that they dress differently. Like I think that I don't want to dress like them cause I don't want people to think that I'm one of them. Like I always think about them when I go shopping or what to wear [6.1.(47)]." Susan also discussed how she had numerous experiences working in Banff where people assumed she was a tourist or had a working visa, and how she worries when she is with her friends, who are mostly East Asian, that people think they are a bunch of immigrants. Susan also stated that: "I'm glad I have a Canadian name because if I had a Japanese name they would see me as a foreigner [6.1.(57)]."

Susan does not deny her ethnic heritage, defining herself as Japanese for people who ask about her ethnic origin, but attempts to disassociate herself from negative markers of difference. When I asked Susan whether she was ever ashamed to be Japanese, she stated:

> Not ashamed um sometimes I would like wish I wasn't Oriental because, as I said in my first interview, I always think people think I'm like from a foreign country that I am a visa student. So then I sometimes wish well if I wasn't Oriental they wouldn't think that. But I've never been ashamed of being Japanese because there is nothing about my culture that I'm ashamed of. But I'm always worried about other people's perceptions of me that's all [4.2.(6)].

For Susan, it appears that she felt that the recent arrival of a large number of Hong Kong immigrants and the attention paid to Vietnamese gangs disrupted her everyday life for the worse.

John has had similar experiences where at times people assume that he cannot speak English. Due to Susan's comments, I asked John what he thought about being seen as an immigrant or foreigner. John said he does not find it insulting but it does bother him. He noted:

> Maybe it's the fact that we think of ourselves as Canadian all the time and to a point you feel that you belong and then when people make those little mistakes it kind of reminds you that you are different or that perceptions exists. It reminds you that there is prejudice around [3.2.(28)].

Unlike some of the other participants, both John and Susan are not immigrants and were born in Canada. Although their parents are immigrants, John's father speaks English fluently and his mother proficiently and have atypical Korean jobs (as will be discussed later). Susan described her parents as Canadianized. In Susan's case, in particular, this may help her to disassociate herself from the immigrant category. For example, Jenny described a couple of incidents where salespersons talked to her as if she did know English. However, she also described incidences where she has had to step in when salespersons were trying to demean and/or cheat her parents. Jenny's parents speak very little English and in her words dress like they are "fresh off the boat". Jenny's experiences may incorporate the fact that her parents still appear and are at times treated as immigrants. Jenny's annoyance or anger appears to be directed

not to immigrants but to individuals (herself, her parents and to the individuals treating her and her parents differently).

b) "I wouldn't be seen with an Asian for the life of me"

Several participants stated that they purposefully do not or did not associate with East Asians or certain types of East Asians. As stated by Pam:

> When I was in high school and university I didn't intentionally avoid them but I tried to distance myself from them. Just because in university I saw huge groups of Koreans and I didn't think it looked very nice. It was the group of Chinese or a group of Black people right. But um I identify with the Koreans in Edmonton but I don't have any link, a direct line, a tangible link [5.1.(11)].

After stating that most of her friends were Asians, I asked Lisa whether this was the case when she was younger.

> I wouldn't be seen with an Asian for the life of me. I hated that look that you got when you were with more than one Asian. You just got that look of disgust or something not disgust but go figure, always in big groups. So I tried not to do that, in fact I avoided it. And I didn't really have any Asian friends until after high school. In high school we had a big Chinese population and I would be with my best friends who are blond hair blue eyed pale pale pale and one girl wanted to beat me up not for me but cause I didn't hang out with my own kind. She thought, what we're not good enough for you, and I never said that. So that made me hate Asians more and I thought why would I want to hang out with you guys if that is the way you feel about everybody else right. So I really despised Asians after that [2.1.(12a)].

Like Lisa and Pam, Susan and Phoung talked about their discomfort when they see a group of East Asians. However, for Susan and Phoung, these feelings are in the present whereas for Pam and Lisa they appear to be in the past. As well as not wanting to be seen as a foreigner by the wider society, Susan also wonders whether "the Asians" are thinking "why isn't she one of us". After stating how uncomfortable she feels walking past a group of East Asians, Susan stated:

> I mean I don't know why I feel so uncomfortable. I eat lunch there and stuff but I don't know why I don't like it. I just don't associate with

> them and stuff and maybe I think they think, why isn't she one of us or something you know why don't I hang out with them and stuff [4.2.(23)].

Phoung stated that: "You would want to relate to them and be surrounded by your own people. But see I'm more of a person that doesn't want to be surrounded by my own people. I'm more a person that wants to hang out with people of other ethnic origins [5.2.(39)]." Their statements reveal that they seem to have this feeling that they are "supposed" to be with "their own" but are not. In Susan's case most of her friends are East Asian, however they are not "those types of Asians" that wear leather and hang out in big "gangs".

Susan also stated that she disliked her high school since it was divided by racé and there were fights based on "race gangs". She went on to note: "I kind of wondered what would have happened if I went to a different school, like Scona, because I don't think that that school is categorized by races [4.2.(19)]." I then stated that as far as I knew that school was majority white. To this Susan responded, "Yup [4.2.(20)]". From this one can see how white is the norm and "of colour" is the difference, the deviance. Susan seems to feels more comfortable when her minority status is truly marginalized by being a small minority in numbers, rather than having her minority status accentuated by a larger number of minority groups.

John, unlike the other participants, stated that he has two distinct groups of friends: Koreans that he mainly sees at church and white friends that he met in high school. In describing his experiences with his different groups of friends, John explained:

> I don't know if it's a inferiority complex or a superiority complex but there is a difference and I am aware of it when I am with my Caucasian friends. But it's not to the point where I feel ostracized or at a disadvantage.... But ya it definitely sometimes feel like you see a group of six foot tall white guys and then you see me. But when I am with them I am not so much aware, it's weird I'm not so much aware of the fact that I am the Korean in a group of like [white guys]. If I go out with a whole bunch of white people and I'm the only Asian. That's doesn't really, I'm not and we go out and it's fine sort of thing. That's doesn't really trigger any reaction but when I go out in a group with a

> lot of Asians, let's say ten guys let's say it's a birthday party or something and you go to a pool hall or club or something and you have a big group of Asians, I tend to feel sort of self conscious cause it's so conspicuous [3.2.(4)].

When one is an East Asian in a group of white people the stereotypes still follows you but one does not have to deal the stereotypes to the same degree. In a sense one disappears. Whereas when one is with a group of East Asians the whole group is objectified as East Asian.[57]

c) Race, Gender and Sex

Another way that the participants seemed to disassociate themselves from the East Asian category is by purposefully not dating East Asian men or women. A number of participants stated that they would rather have sexual relations with members not of their group. This may be due to numerous factors such as gossip within ethnic communities, pressure from family and community when you are dating someone from that community and so forth. However, it appears as if there is a relationship between the internalization of gendered racist stereotypes and the choice of partners. Phoung believes that:

> I never wanted to marry Vietnamese. For a time when I was young when I was going through the crushes phase I did like Oriental people but then I didn't like them. I just had this stereotype that the guys were

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[57] This attempt to blend into the crowd may be accentuated by growing up in Edmonton and area which, compared to larger cities in Canada, and until recently, has had a small population of East Asians. The desire, pressure and practicality of assimilating may be greater in smaller communities. John made a distinction between people of his and my generation and the young Koreans he sees today. He states:

> ...people our age because of what Korea was like because of what we were like when we were young we have more of an immigrant mentality. I think we are trying to be like the whites. We are saying we don't fit in and I think that has a lot to do with when we were kids and the fact that everyone else was white. All the popular kids were white not because they were white just because there were so many whites. And I think that has a lot to do with how we grew up whereas with these guys, a) there are more of them, b) Korea is like the idea of Korea since the Olympics has been so strong and climbing so they are not focusing on the fact that they are a minority... It's [Korean] more like it's part of their identity. They are just confident or they are just happy being themselves [3.2.(40)].

> so egotistical and everything and I just kind of go stay away from me. I started liking other people. I don't know but no I never thought of myself as marrying Oriental. I always wanted to marry someone of a different race cause I wanted to have a mixed raced child. I don't know cause they are so beautiful but um but I think I will end up marrying within the race if not Vietnamese then Chinese [8.1.(26)].

In addition, after stating that she "would never marry an Oriental" Susan stated:

> I don't know why. I just like cause I think about it like why am I not attracted to any Orientals.... I guess I don't lately I just don't want people to think cause there are a lot of immigrants here now right and I just don't want people to think that I'm one of them. And if I see an Oriental couple I automatically think that they are immigrants. Depending on the way they are dressed too but. And um so I guess that's why I'm more attracted to other people [6.1.(23)].

However, Susan has met an "Oriental man" that she does like and "I think I kind of realized that it's just certain kinds of Orientals like I realized it's those types of guys that wear all black and leather you know biker boots those types of guys [4.2.(15)]." Susan went on to note that: "In my high school there was a lot of those type of guys so I guess I associate Orientals as either being F.O.B's or those types of guys [4.2.(16)]."

In essence these women are stereotyping East Asian men. However, they also discussed their annoyance with being stereotyped as an East Asian female. Phoung stated that she thinks her parents want her to be and the rest of society assumes she is a "little good girl":

> I'm often when people describe me or their impression of me is I'm just a little good girl. I don't know they just that impression of me like I don't know if it's because I am Vietnamese or because I am small or I don't know but that's the impression they have [8.1.(31)].

Jenny said that she is more attracted to Caucasian men since she has more in common with them. She also showed annoyance at people thinking that she is a " delicate flower".

> For me I'm naturally quiet when I was in school. But a lot of times when they see an Oriental and they think she is like the sweetest little delicate flower. It's like your labeled as is and sometimes it's to an

> advantage but a lot of times no. It's really annoying cause when someone labels you just because of your colour or the way you are its really bad [1.1.(38)].

John wants to marry a second generation Korean-Canadian woman: "I want my children to identify, as assimilated as I may be, I still feel that there is something about being Korean and I love it to a certain extent and I really want my kids to feel the same way.... [3.1.(56)]." John also wants his future wife and his parents to have a "full [in-law] relationship" which he feels can only occur if the woman is Korean (not Chinese or any other ethnicity). However, John has never dated a Korean woman.

> ...maybe why I haven't dated another Korean not just the fact that I haven't met anyone. They are sort of passive not passive as much as quite honestly not challenging.... Maybe a lot of reasons why I have met Korean woman and not been attracted to them you probably know. Korean woman they are nice and they are friendly and stuff and oh you know. You start talking and you can talk about whatever like about families but um they don't bring anything you know. It's fun and amusing but it not challenging enough. It's an over generalization but I don't know [3.1.(83)].

John went on to state:

> Boring like I used to say they were boring like I thought Korean women were boring. They are too for the most part they are very not so much forgiving but very easy going in a sense. Not easy going in a sense of patient or accepting but more than that. You know they have an aversion to conflict you know what I mean and that that is just boring that's just I don't know confrontation is good [3.1.(84)].

What was interesting about this portion of the interview with John was that he expressed his reasons why he has never dated another Korean and I expressed my reasons for not dating a Korean man. I stated that I felt that Korean men in general, unless they were third or fourth generation (considering second generation still means they were raised by first generation parents), were sexist and were looking for the nice complacent girl. John could not relate to my stereotype and revealed his own stereotype. Considering that neither of us have chosen to date a Korean or East Asian,

this begs the question of how much of our perceptions are valid and how much of it is based on racist stereotyping of one's group and of oneself.

Although, the participants may partly see themselves and others through racist stereotypes, this does not mean that they do not feel the need or feel pressure to marry within their ethnic group. Although Jenny stated that she is more attracted to Caucasian men, it is very important to her parents that she marry someone of Chinese descent. John stated that his parents might be disappointed if he did not marry a Korean woman but that did not appear to be an overwhelming factor. However, John did comment on how he has thought about these issues a great deal.

> But that kind of stresses. Is it just me do you think is it just me or minorities in general that worry about like how a spouse will fit into their family like their parents and stuff. Like do you think it's a typical Korean thing or a typical minority thing [3.1.(52)]?

I believe that for cultural minorities the chances of them thinking and "stressing" about the possibilities prior to the event are much greater. For the majority, they may think about interracial/intercultural issues but chances are it is only when it happens and it is probably not seen as that significant (unless they oppose interracial/intercultural couples or want to date a stereotype, that is the exotic, passive Asian woman, the sexually potent Black man and so forth).

WHAT POWER DO I AND PEOPLE LIKE ME EXERCISE?

I will attempt to answer the question of "What Power do I and People like me exercise?" by discussing the ways the participants have learned to live with race and racism.[58] The participants' different ways of seeing race and racism reveal the ways in which race intersects with various social and individual factors.

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[58] I borrow the phrase from Henry (1994) since I think it better explains the processes of race rather than survival or coping mechanism.

"I'm making all these jokes"

John's way of dealing with his visibility and racism is evidenced in the following statement:

> You know the weird thing is that when I am with my Caucasian friends, my white friends, ever since I was young I would always use it as a joke. Even this past weekend the fact that I was the only Asian, the only minority... I would always you make cracks about this kind of thing.... Everyone has these uniforms ... and ours was western wear and some girl asked me how come you are not wearing a cowboy hat. And I said they won't let me cause I'm Asian or whatever. The whole weekend or the whole week was little snide remarks I would make about being the visible minority. And even when I am with my high school friends and stuff I'm always making jokes about doing their laundry or opening up a corner store or something like that, like typical Korean things you know. And uh I think it's funny. That's the kind of humor that has almost become expected of me when we are out with my friends and they will make the same jokes. But recently I've been thinking like I don't know whether that is as healthy as I think it is like the fact that I'm making all these jokes [3.2.(44)].

John offered several interpretations of his joking and believed that all of them were valid to a certain extent. He believed that it could be: a) "self hatred", b) "self pity" in terms of "...wallowing in our lowly position as minorities...". He stated: "We find it funny cause humour is the best medicine. We make fun of it to make ourselves feel better about this reality that subconsciously we know exists [3.2.(50)]." And/or c) an act of resistance and empowerment. John stated that: "In using the comment yourself you are empowering yourself. You are beating them to the punch so to speak. Even if they are not going to say it they are thinking it. It puts you in a position of power cause you are calling yourself instead of them calling you [3.2.(51)]." John thought that his joking can both, perpetuate stereotypes by making them acceptable and make people confront their prejudice and make it unacceptable.

For John, it is important to point out that his ability to laugh at these stereotypes of Koreans may be easier since he and his family do not fit the stereotypes. "All Korean families have certain similarities but I think uh there are sometimes where I can't

relate like I just don't [fit] that experience just because of the way my parents are [3.2.(3)]." John described himself as not a stereotypical Korean since his parents are atypical Koreans. John's relationship to the Korean community and the wider society is filtered through his upper-middle to upper class status. This economic status would not be as significant if his family gained their status through self-employment like most Koreans.

> Like I think my family is really lucky. And uh but ya it's embarrassing when people say this you know like [his friend saying he doesn't realize the hardships many Koreans go through]. It just feels weird talking about it. I used to not tell people what my dad did kind of thing... Cause you feel kind of uncomfortable. Especially when your friends fathers are janitors or welders or something. And you know they will come over.... Especially when I started hanging out with more Koreans the difference showed through. Like they live in tiny houses in the north end or in Millwoods and they we had relatively speaking a big house and cars and it's embarrassing like you don't want to talk about it [3.1.(9)].

Part of the humour for John and his friends may be in the absurdity of it whereas for others dealing with how they and their families fit the stereotypes may be silencing rather than empowering. For example, Jenny's parents work in manual labour jobs. She stated that she was very embarrassed of what her parents did. Although my parents never owned a grocery store, they have owned a Korean restaurant. Prior to this my mother was a seamstress and my father was a welder by day and a Tae-Kwon-Do instructor by night. I was usually apprehensive about telling non-Asians that my parents owned a restaurant, in part, due to the stereotype of the rich East Asian immigrants. For the majority it appears as if to be self-employed meant wealth whereas for many East Asians, who cannot work in the mainstream due to educational and language barriers and racism, it means that it is their only option beyond manual labour (see Kim, 1986, pp. 202-203). Another reason was that I was a university student. Therefore, it appeared as if I could not discuss racism since my parents appeared to be economically successful and I am educationally successful.

John also seems to have always been generally proud of being Korean.

> I don't remember it but I've always felt well not always I mean I can't specifically say a time where I felt ashamed of being Korean or wanting to be white. But I know I can't deny the fact that it has happened or I have felt that way. But for the most part maybe it's been an overcompensation. I've been fairly O.K. with the fact, happy that I am Korean. In elementary there were three other minority or three other Asian kids in my class or two sorry.... And I remember the three of us I don't know it was the combination of our personalities or whatever we were very strong to the point where we would make white kids feel uncomfortable cause they weren't Asian.... We made him feel uncomfortable being white whereas I think we felt more confident because of the group the group mentality [3.2.(74b)].

John also tells a story where: "Um some kids at school were teasing me and calling me chink and I said something to the fact of I'm not a chink, I'm a Korean king or a Korean prince [3.2.(74a)]." Therefore, for John this confidence in being Korean and Canadian also may be a factor in why he can easily joke about the stereotypes. Perhaps since John is not the "typical Korean" he can be confident whereas Jenny does not have this luxury.

"As an individual I can join you as an equal"

John also stated that racism has affected the way he sees himself and others. After indirectly establishing the fact that John does believe he has experienced racism, I asked him in what ways racism has affected him.[59]

> Um and I think also like how I think. I think about my perceptions of things, my perceptions of me as an individual, not associated with Asian but thinking of white people as a homogenous group. I think that has a lot to do with how racism or how prejudice has affected me. I

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[59] In John's case I did ask him the research question (at least a very close version of it). John was the one participant who offered himself for the research since, "I love talking about this kind of stuff [off tape]." Accordingly, John has done a great deal of thinking and reading in the area of ethnicity, race and identity. It was clear from early on in our interactions that John does believe that racism has affected him. In addition, he was very articulate in what he thought were some of the ways in which racism has affected him. His interviews most closely resembled Oakley's idea of non-exploitative interviews (see p. 46 of this thesis).

> think it's like a stereotypical outsider view of the insider how they are cohesive and a denial of the fact that me, as a minority, am part of the minority. I look at myself as an individual. Not a part like Korean but I'm not part of that Korean group. I'm Asian but I'm not. I don't view everyone as my brothers and sisters so I'm an individual in that sense. But I look at white people and it's white people. Even my vocabulary it's white I use the term white. I look at you know me and them that kind of thing yet when I'm out with my friends they, five white guys, thinking they are cohesive and I am the individual. I think that has a lot to do with it [3.2.(76)].

John highlights his belief that when one is continually associated with a group, one tends to see others in groups while denying that they are also associated with a group. John also has a tendency to break down the groups he knew others thought he belonged to, that is Asian or Korean, into smaller groups. John divides Canadians of Korean heritage into three categories: a) "just completely in this Korean mode", b) "fencesitters", and c) "completely satellite". The categories are all in relation to a persons relationship with the Korean community in Canada. John sees himself as a "fencesitter" and we agreed that I would be "completely satellite".[60] As stated earlier, Susan divides East Asians into Canadians and foreigners and immigrants. Jenny, like many of the participants, divides East Asians by ethnicity. However, she also divides East Asians according to cliques or to the degree in which they have assimilated into Canadian society. There are different types of East Asians: "geeky ones, fashionable trendy ones, ones that just came cause they have hello kitty knapsacks, one's that attend church [off tape]." In an attempt to see themselves as individuals, my guess is that many of the participants tend to focus on differences within the group East Asian.

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[60] Much of this has to do with the fact that I do not attend a Korean church. However, my parents and extended family are part of the Korean community. It is their children who are not. Pam, as well does not attend a Korean church and thus for the most part is outside the Korean community. I would also note that I believe that the fact that being a part of the Korean community is so closely tied with Christianity (in Edmonton as well as other Canadian cities) has affected my relationship to Christianity. Christianity for me represents a stifling conformity, exclusivity (in relation to non-Koreans) and as something for "those Koreans" whom as a teenager I attempted to avoid.

Some of the participants also lumped others into a homogenous group, for example whites, Blacks, and Natives.

I would also state that defining oneself as Canadian is an attempt to see oneself as an individual. After stating that he defines himself as Canadian first and then of Korean heritage, John also stated:

> I don't know I mean to say you're Canadian it's like it doesn't say anything about you really. You keep hearing that there is no national identity and I think it's partly true. Like I consider myself Canadian both politically speaking and citizenship wise but. And even identity I'm a Canadian but if you want to talk about my personality or culture it's not Canadian You know it's more of a mix because I think it's like you know Canadian culture is like white bread. It's boring there is nothing there and Korean is sort of topping or flavour do you know what I am saying. I think saying Canadian doesn't say much about you [3.1(31b(ii))].

John simultaneously highlights the dominant perception of the ambiguity of "Canadian" as well as recognizing how Canadian means Anglo-Canadian. For John, and other visible minorities, saying one is Canadian also means that they are an individual and as individual Canadians they can then join other Canadians as equals. In discussing the fact that non-Asians see him as Asian John stated:

> And then so we feel self conscious of the fact that we are separated from the white group and we are put into another group and so as a point of asserting yourself, as a point of trying to be like them, you are saying no I don't belong in that. I'm an individual. And as an individual I can join you as an equal [3.2.(56)].

This attempt to be seen as an equal, as Canadian, is also prevalent in Susan.

"If there wasn't as many"/ "I've never experienced that"

Susan stated that she has never experienced racism. When I asked Susan what things have affected the way she sees herself, I gave her some examples of what I thought affected me in order to clarify my confusing question. I stated that for me, my

family, education, being a woman and racism are some of the things that I think have affected me. Susan responded:

> I would say all those things you mentioned except for racism. I've never experienced that. My family and the way I'm comparing my family to the typical Japanese family that lives in Japan. I see the differences and hear about the differences so I see myself differently. You know I think I would have been a totally different person if I was raised in Japan. My friends [4.2.(11)].

Near the end of our second interview, I asked Susan whether she felt that people seeing her as an immigrant or foreigner could in any way be connected to racism. She said: "I think racism to me if a person is racist they treat that person differently. So I don't think them seeing me as a foreigner is racist unless they actually do something nasty to me. It's just something they notice it's something they see, Oh she's a foreigner [4.2.(58)]." Susan adds that she rarely thinks about issues of race and racism. Susan negates the significance of her racial difference in relation to other Canadians but demands difference in relation to immigrants and foreigners. This practice of continually defining herself and wanting to be defined against foreigners and immigrants may signal her desires to be seen as, and the difficulty in being seen as, Canadian.

Susan does not see her fears as a symptom of growing up and living in a racist society but as the problem of too many immigrants. Therefore, if the immigrants would go away than there would not be a problem.

> I mean if there wasn't so many like visa students immigrants here now cause there are so many. Like in the last few years so many of them come overseas. If there wasn't as many like if there was the same as when I was in elementary then I probably wouldn't think about it I wouldn't be as conscious... [6.1.(49)].

In addition, Susan does not seem to think that she has a visible minority status. After stating that she has never been treated differently, I asked her whether she ever felt

different from other people, for example Caucasian or white friends. To this Susan stated:

> Actually I don't have that many white friends. Most of my friends are Oriental. But thinking in elementary and junior high you know I had like friends from all different races and it just didn't occur to me. I actually never thought about it. I remember thinking about like one of my friends was East Indian and Muslim in junior high. And one day I just realized that she was a minority in the school and I never realized it before and so until later on in our friendship. But I've never been treated differently. The only thing is that people automatically think that Orientals are smart and I was never the honors students so it eventually got it bugged me you know.... Just cause I'm Oriental so that's it. Never anything else [6.1.(19)].

Susan's way of living with race is to state that she is not different from the majority. Rather it is other people who are different: immigrants, foreigners, visible minorities, "those guys that wear leather", etc. In addition Susan seems to think that it is difference which is the problem. It appears that Susan thinks that racism would cease to exist if the people with race would stop hanging out in "race gangs". Although Susan's friends are mostly all East Asian, her friends are different and they are not a "race gang".

I am equal in my inequality

Mark's thoughts on his visibility focused on his belief in the impossibility of equality. Hence, according to Mark, people are autonomous individuals who should do their best and not complain. After discussing how his family tried to assimilate and be "good Canadians" I asked Mark whether he thought it was possible to fully assimilate.

> You mean to Canada? You're going back to this visible minority thing eh? You're pretty pessimistic hey? Uh I don't know I like to think that I'm pretty optimistic.... This goes back to my belief in equality. Like I said I don't think that anyone is equal right and I think that life is unfair. So I think that any opportunities you take you have to exploit and not sit on your laurels. And any hardships you endure you cannot

> whine and bitch about them you have to overcome them and they make you stronger [4.1.(55)].

Mark went on to state that he may not be able to fully assimilate, however, he has come to terms with this. He believes that he has to deal with reality since going back to Japan is not an option.

> Well it is an option it may not be a good option but it is an option. Go to Japan I mean I may not be wanted there either so what am I going to label myself the ugly duckling of the world and say whatever right. To me you have to have, again it boils down to how you perceive life. I know a lot of people you know life is so bad. I have to think although my life isn't as good as a lot of people my life is better than no life so you make do [4.1.(60)].

Mark's belief in the old addage "what does not kill you will make you stronger" may stem in part from his pride in his family. He stated, they "lost everything" when they were interned during W.W.II and "...could have bitched, whined and complained but they worked really hard... [4.1.(8)]." His belief may also be due to his experiences.

> When I look at myself and I got into some pretty bad situations.... One thing that I'm happy with is that I survived those times... I was very lucky.. I look back and I look at that time period and for me... you know that's who I am now... who I am today a lot of it has to do with that road that I took. I mean everyone chooses a road and some of us choose harder roads than others... It would have been very easy for me to fall to the waste side.... But I think in anything your environment has an extreme effect on who you become [4.1.(17)].

Mark believes that individuals are a product of their environment. He does not blame individuals or groups of individuals for their situations but he ardently believes that one must work hard to bring oneself out of the circumstances one finds oneself in. Mark also does not blame individuals for their "ignorance". Mark relayed an incident where a customer, after talking to him for several hours, got his attention by calling him Hop Sing. He believes that the individual was ignorant rather than racist. Mark relayed this incident to me in order to explain his belief that words do not constitute racism, intention does.

> To me I think if he was racist: 1) he wouldn't want to be at the bar cause there were lots of seats at that place where he could have sat down by himself right, 2) he wouldn't have wanted to talk to me or I would have at least perhaps maybe gotten some negative vibes from him as if he was talking down to me. Because I have had people come in there they talk down to me. I could be, maybe I am dead ass wrong on this situation maybe he was racist. But I'm just trying to illustrate that words people we are programmed a certain way and people don't want to think for themselves [4.1.(24)].

However, I would state that racism is not about intent. Regardless of whether one is intentionally being racist, one's statements can still be racist in that they are fueled by racism and racist thought. Nor do I believe that racism necessitates a tangible action or force. The act of labeling people with a negative difference based on race in itself perpetuates racism.

It appears that Mark's family and his experiences may have more to do with why Mark does not believe in equality. However, I would state that if racism did not contribute to his belief in inequality, this belief may assist Mark in dealing with his visibility. Mark intermingles the difference of race with differences of height, intelligence, beauty and weight. This may allow Mark to see the ways in which he is advantaged as well as disadvantaged. Mark presents various inequalities however; he still appears to believe in a meritocratic society based on hard work, where we all enter as individuals, albeit unequal. He does not seem to be as concerned with questioning why an attribute is considered to be, and who determines what is, an advantage or a disadvantage. He also does not appear to critique society for perpetuating and creating inequality but seems to see inequality as a natural condition.

Comfort and Individual preference

Alan, like Mark has a strong belief in individualism. Alan seems to associate issues of race with comfort levels and personal preference. In discussing the affect of him being Chinese in terms of getting a job in his field, Alan believed that his future employers would have to consider the comfort of the clients.

> It's a service industry and a lot of it is how you are perceived by the public. So they sort have have to look at it in terms of what will clients think about going to a Chinese person as opposed to a white person. Most of the clients are white. They might not feel comfortable going to a Chinese person as opposed to a white person. Just the perception of it. So not only do they have to pay attention to their own philosophy but also what type of clients I think... But I think at the same time depending on how open minded they are they might see me as something different something else something different to offer... but I think ya it might serve as a hindrance and it might be an advantage for me as well depending on why and what ... [7.1.(28)].

After I brought up advertisements and their perpetuation of Western ideals of beauty, Alan and I had a discussion on a mutual acquaintance of Chinese heritage who wore blue contacts. Alan thought having blue contacts was analogous to dying one's hair or buying a red blouse instead of a blue one. He saw it as an issue of individual preference and not a social issue of race and gender. He stated:

> Maybe she actually thinks she looks better physically maybe it's not that she wants to be more white maybe she thinks I look better with blue eyes it's like dying your hair brown or something... she thinks it enhances her physical look. It's like buying a red blouse instead of a blue one [2.2.(28)].

Seeing issues of race as ones of personal preference or comfort serves to simplify the issue. Everyone has an individual choice, however, these "choices" are also socially conditioned. Employers do have to cater to public perceptions, however these perceptions are also socially conditioned.

Negating the relationship between individual choice and social enforcement is indicative of growing up in a society based on individualism and meritocracy. However, I would also add that for Alan, seeing issues of race as ones of comfort appears to be consistent with his personality. One can see how Alan deals with race relations or the place he puts himself in by his reference to his role on his sports team.

> ...the white guys are more talkative more of the leaders than the Chinese or Asian guys are. And that's sort of my job. I sort of saw myself as a sort of liaison between the white guys and cause I didn't want the Chinese guys just to stick together and the white guys to stick

> together on this team cause it was a team. ...and I worked hard to try to get these guys to interact and I think I was pretty successful.., during the game it's really good... but in the dressing room social interactions before and after the game the white guys talk to white guys more and the Chinese guys talk to Chinese guys more or the Koreans guys more. But that wasn't because the white guys didn't talk to the Chinese guys, ...it was more because the Chinese guys wanted to stick together not cause the white guys didn't want to interact with the Chinese guys. It's the Chinese guys. They didn't think, I don't think it was cause they didn't want to interact with them. I think it was because they didn't think they should be interacting with them because I think they thought they weren't up to par with them for some reason [2.2.(40)].

Alan seems concerned with issues of harmony. Unlike Pam, he does not appear to feel the need to be superior to anyone. Rather he would prefer that everyone get along as equals. Alan does not want to offend anyone and he does not get easily offended. Alan appears to be secure in who he is and what he thinks.

Culture, Race and Western hegemony: doing things the wrong way

For Phoung, issues of race and racism do not appear to be nearly as relevant to her as the difficulty she has in dealing with the cultural differences between her and her parents. She stated:

> I focus so much on family cause that is where my greatest struggle is within the family not with me and the outside world. And also because I don't want to make myself a family that is the not same as my family right now. It's different. I mean my children will grow up differently than I grew up. I grew up differently than my parents grew up. However they treated me they see me through the eyes of their the way they were raised, their own childhood [5.2.(87)].

Phoung appears to be both proud of and grateful to her parents as well as embarrassed and resentful of them. Phoung seemed to feel guilty because she knows her parents have struggled in Vietnam, in Hong Kong refugee camps and in Canada but does not respect their ways. She stated:

> Sometimes I think to me it feels like you are so mad at them for doing something wrong you know a different way. Why can't you be like my

> friends my friends' parents and then you think about well my friends don't do this like we do per se and then it kind of balances out just so you don't have that guilt trip. Basically its different and you just have to accept it the way they raised you [8.1.(45)].

Like Phoung, Jenny talked about how much she appreciates how hard her parents have worked for her. Jenny believes that her parents have worked much harder and sacrificed much more for their children than her Caucasian friends' parents. This seems to assist Jenny in dealing with the differences between her and her parents.

> Sometimes you think I'm just going to go and never turn back but it's just that that stops you. Personally I'm like that cause we have a lot of problems too because I have different values than they do too. And at times you kind of think that's it my parents are driving me insane. But that is the only thing that always pulls me back to them cause I'll always remember that. For me that's really special [1.1.(13)].

When she was growing up Jenny appears to have been ashamed of herself and her parents.

> I was you know I don't know about you but teenage years were really hard you know cause you kind of hide your culture. That's what I did. I regret doing that but you try and fit into the social scene and you try and be Caucasian. I was like oh ya we eat this kind of food and we do this and yet it's like completely opposite. Like I did you know hide certain things and never let anybody know what my parents do you know. I was very ashamed but now it's no big deal. But now I accept it. I'm very grateful for what they did but before it's like you know due to peer pressure you have to have a certain image and stuff like that [1.1.(39)].

Phoung talked about the differences between her and her parents and her friends' parents in greater detail.

> Ya also this is like completely different is that one aspect of it is that we are so not touchy with each other. We are not close in the sense of emotional closeness. We don't talk about our feelings we don't um we don't sit down to discuss things. Just the fact that when my parents come home we don't greet each other like oh hi mom hi dad how was your day or work or hi Phoung how was school. We don't do that kind of stuff. Me and my friend we were just talking about this last week. And it's so different because my white girlfriend she was like ya me

> my mom and dad they always come home they come in the room wherever I am in the house they come and find me and say hi. And I think in our family we don't do that at all. We don't sit down and talk. And I think that is where a lot of problems start because you don't get that communication across. And I know like I know it's common for like our culture to be that way um. I don't think it's good um and that was the one of the communication barriers [8.1.(32)].[61]

Another aspect about her parents which seemed to bother Phoung greatly is her parents' sexism. Phoung continually brought up how she feels her parents are sexist and treat her and her brother very differently. I asked Phoung whether these feelings she has about her parents may be due to a generation gap between her and her parents which most teenagers feel to a certain extent. She stated:

> In terms of well for white people when they say they are ashamed of their parents it's at a different level than we are. Cause we are in a sense that we are so much more restricted than they are. And our parents when we are ashamed or embarrassed of them it is because they are holding on to their values too much the traditions of the past and stuff. But the white people it's a different matter it's like I think it's not as relevant as us and what we grow up with [5.2.(25)].

Phoung stated that it is her family that has shaped the way she sees herself and racism.

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[61] In discussing the idea that Koreans are not as individualistic as Westerners, John added:

> I had this theory about Korean parents and their sort of hands off approach to parenting. I don't know if this is right... This whole hands off approach to parenting has I think might have to do with the fact that they do have this collective mentally. Society is ordered in a hierarchy and responsibility goes down. In Korea a parent may not have day to day interaction with a child but they know that if a kid is misbehaving on the street someone is going to slap them on the head and say smarten up. In school teachers are responsible for your children. So you trust society to pick up the slack. And they move here and they have the same sort of mentality and society doesn't pick up the slack. And you get a lot of Korean kids now a days a lot of Korean kids who kind of fall away and they take advantage of the fact that their parents aren't around or they may resent it so they rebel or whatever. They get off track well if there is any set track. You know what I mean they kind of stray from the ideal. And the parents are disappointed but they don't know why cause they figure that they did not do anything wrong cause if they were in Korea it's O.K. [3.1.(24)].

Although John is referring specifically to Koreans, his insights may in part be applicable to other East Asian cultures.

> Overall I think the family effects you the most cause that is where most of your life is within your own family. The way you are raised I think it changes your perspective from how you see life and how you see racism and how you see yourself being treated in the world as Asian or any other ethnic background for that matter [5.2.(28)].

However, I would add that racism has affected the way she sees her family. The cultural differences between her and her parents would not be as significant if it was not for the fact that Western society defines "their ways" as exotic, backward, inferior, and wrong. Phoung speaks Vietnamese fluently thus language does not factor into her ability to communicate with her parents. However, in Jenny's case language barriers are a factor. Jenny speaks conversational Fukienese and a little Cantonese and Mandarin while her parents hardly speak any English.

Like Phoung and Jenny, I think that my parents have worked extremely hard at a level that many would find difficult to understand. As I was growing up I had to deal with the guilt of being ashamed of them because they were Korean. However, unlike Phoung, I did not feel more restricted nor did I think that my parents were necessarily traditional (since I thought that many of my Korean friends' parents were much more strict and traditional). Rather, I thought the problem was Korean culture. Like Phoung, I wished that my parents offered more emotional support and affection. I also struggled with perceptions of my parents' sexism. However, over the years, I began to understand Korean culture more and my parents' behavior began to make sense. This knowledge was mostly gained through years of thinking and talking about it since the knowledge is not present in the wider society.

I still do not agree with some of their beliefs, however, I also began to realize that I was judging my parents by Western standards of behavior. The lines between simply disagreeing with my parents and seeing them through the eyes of Western hegemony was blurred. This judgment is further enhanced by seeing my parents and Korean culture through racist stereotypes rather than as complex human beings. My parents were the money-hungry, emotionally inept, East Asians; my mother was the

complacent, disempowered, ready to please East Asian woman; and my father was the sexist, oppressive, egotistical East Asian man.

Ikemoto (1993) states:

> If you live within a society pervaded by racism, then racism prescribes your experience. Racism is so much a part of our experience, that we cannot always recognize those moments when we participate. As a corollary, if you experience racism as one marginalized by it, then you use racism to explain your relations with other groups and their members (p. 1585).

For me, learning about Korean culture and Korean society is only part of the answer. Phoung states that, "It would be nice to have a novel about someone those people who escaped from Vietnam and came here. What they struggled with and stuff you never hear about that. All we have are facts facts facts about the Vietnam War [5.2.(93)]." Cultural pride in one's origins is important, however one must also ask oneself, what is this culture?, how do I see it? and how can I see it?

a) "No, no, no. They are like whatever..."

Another aspect of Western hegemony is that the experience of racism is silenced. Caplan (1988), discussing the work of Rabinow, notes that "...an elite group maintains power...by labeling as vulgar/uninteresting/impolite certain subjects, such as sexism or racism (p. 15)." In addition, it is the subtlety and invisibility of racism in Canada which places the burden of proof on the individuals and groups who experience racism. This serves to deter visible minorities from bringing forth their experiences and acting against racism (Brand and Bhaggiyadatta: 1986, p. 4). Both Phoung and Jenny did not seem to think that they could discuss their experiences with some of their friends. After stating that she believes it is much harder for her parents than it is for her Caucasian friends' parents, I asked Jenny whether she also thought it was harder for her. She stated:

> At times you know it sounds really stupid but I feel that there is still racism and discrimination and stuff like that. And I feel like as in job

> wise, getting a job Caucasians are very privileged because they already have that leg up. But for us we have to work extra hard in order to prove that we are competent. And I find it's very at times they are very privileged and I don't think that they see that. But I do because I'm a coloured person and I see things differently... [1.1.(14)].

However, when I asked Jenny whether she ever talks about this with her friends, she stated, "No, no, no. They are like whatever but I think they are, as in like anything, they are very privileged [1.1.(15)]." Phoung stated: "...when I go out with my white friends you change your manners so it suits theirs. So that you don't feel so self conscious so you don't feel like they are looking at you and thinking look at what she is doing oh that's gross type of thing so [5.2.(43)]." Phoung, also mentioned that mannerisms of her white friends, such as leaving shoes on in the house, makes her feel uncomfortable. However she does not say anything. Phoung appears to be conscious of herself but she does not feel that she can voice her discomfort when her white friends do something that makes her feel uncomfortable. This may have something to do with why she stated that recently she has started to have more Asian friends. She stated that she feels much more comfortable with them since they understand her environment and what she goes through.

b) Individual Fault

This climate of silence where the participants' are not validated may in part explain why Jenny seems to think that racism is her problem and her fault. Like Mark and Alan, Jenny tends to treat issues of race as individual and personal rather than structural and social. Jenny treats issues of racism as one of getting to know nice people from that group, accepting yourself and your parents and building yourself up to be the best person you can be. Kirby and McKenna (1989) note that: "It has been our experience that people on the margins often know something is wrong, but their concerns are interpreted as a personal problem or failing rather than as a public issue (p. 28)". Jenny stated that when she was younger she would get a lot of racist

remarks, however as an adult she does not. Jenny continued, "Maybe it's because of the way I present myself [1.1.(18)]." She also talked about how it was difficult growing up because all the boys wanted a blue eyed, blond girlfriend. However, she believes that as an adult she is more attractive to the majority because, "Maybe it's just the way I am now [1.1.(24)]." Therefore for Jenny saying it is the way she is now also indirectly states that if she had any problems before it was due to the way she was before.

Affirming an Identity

In contrast to most of the other participants, (who tend to focus on their individuality) Pam and Lisa appear to focus on their ethnicity or their racial group. Pam and Lisa state that they feel more comfortable with other Asians (not necessarily Koreans) and started doing so in their late teens.

a) "So I Resist"

Unlike the other participants, Pam did not see a distinction between Korean-Canadians and Koreans and defined Koreans in Canada as Koreans who live overseas. To Pam her "Koreanness" has recently become a source of great empowerment. It seems as if Pam aims to become the model minority by increasing her class status. Pam also validates East Asians as the yellow peril. Pam believes that in the future East Asians will be the most powerful group in the world.

> In the global scheme I think that the white race is certainly declining like the Western civilization is declining or that's just how history works right. That's what I think,...not that I want to start a race war or anything. But I think that if there is a part of the world that is destined sort of thing to lead the world in the future it will be Asians. I think Asians are [1.2.(20)].

Pam's pride in being Korean seems to be related to the economic rise of the Pacific Rim countries and her perceived, dictated and real connections with it. It would appear that Pam would not be focusing as much on her connections with Korea if it

was not for her "distance from the mainstream". When I asked Pam what some of the factors which have shaped her views on life are, she stated:

> I think the major shaper force is probably family and um sort of a distance from the mainstream. And my parents have always said you should strive to make something of yourself. But also I think it was further strengthened by this disconnection with the mainstream. Does that make sense [5.1.(36)]?

After stating that she wondered whether she can be Canadian whereby white people can as soon as they lose their accent Pam stated: "Cause it's visual. I think that that can never be totally wiped out. I think my approach is just to work with it [5.1.(48)]."

Although Pam emphasized her Koreanness, she also stated that she does not feel like she belongs to any one culture, community, nation or society.

> I don't know maybe in terms of Asian even though I grew up here I still feel a connection with Korea, more of a connection I think than with Canada per se. But yet I am still kind of hovering over both cause when I'm here I don't exactly know, I'm not 100% sure how others perceive me, how the white race perceives me. And then when I went to Korea I still couldn't experience fully how a total Korean feels cause you are a *geupo*[62] right I really think. So I resist (laughs). You have two parties who are kind of part of you [1.2.(29)].

She asserted that a lack of belonging is fine, "As long as I can use it. I know that seems very Machievellian but um you got to. I think with us you can use both without. There are positives and negatives of not belonging as well and a positive is that you can go from one to another [1.2.(31)]." She does not apologize for "using it" believing it to be commonsensical, however, she does wonder: "You think I'm selling out though? I think sometimes I am. [1.2.(47)]." Pam may be questioning her emphasis on Korean, since when she was younger she did not associate herself with Korea.

> When I was younger I couldn't care less about my Korean heritage. I didn't think about it. I didn't care if I spoke my language kind of thing. When you are older I don't know if it's the getting older part or trying

[62] A Korean word meaning immigrant.

> to grab an opportunity that was the driving force behind cultural retention. But I've become more interested in Korean [5.1.(28)].

Pam described her ethnicity as "a tool". Pam appeared to be attempting to sell her ethnicity, her authenticity. Trinh (1989) states that:

> Today, planned authenticity is rife; as a product of hegemony and a remarkable counterpart of universal standardization, it constitutes an efficacious means of silencing the cry of racial oppression. We no longer wish to erase your difference. We demand, on the contrary, that you remember and assert it. At least, to a certain extent (p. 89).

The demand that visible minorities be different but not too different leads to the following sort of confusion.

> Are you saying that I want to have my cake and eat it to right? Like I want to be accepted. Cause that's the way I saw it objectively when I took myself away from it. I thought to myself if someone was saying that to me I would be boy this girl wants to be accepted and yet she wants her differences. She wants all the advantages of being different but then she also wants all the advantages of being part [5.1.(44)].

Pam also stated: "Um do you think it's racist in any way that a company would consider you to be or confuse you with the Asians overseas [1.2.(39)]." She then proceeded to answer her own question with: "I think it is practical. I think it works [1.2.(41)]." Pam is right, it does work for the time being, however, it also perpetuates the ideologies behind Western hegemony.

Pam is aware of racism and does seem to question, to a certain extent, her contributions to it by "choosing" the packaged ethnic, rather than voicing the complexity of her identity. However, Pam appears to have come to the conclusion that the only identity which gives her power is Korean. Pam appears to be using her ethnicity in order to raise her class status. She decided to enroll in her program for mostly practical reasons as well as prestige, status and security. Pam believes that "everyone is classed and there is no getting around that [1.2.(45)]." Prestige, status, security and wealth are all qualities which her parents emphasize; however, Pam also

may be focusing on raising her class status since this is the one thing she feels she can control. In raising her economic status, Pam seems to feel that she can contribute to a better society. After we discussed how being successful does not necessarily mean one sold out, Pam stated: "It takes so long to um...a lot of effort to try to change things on the front-burner right cause you can change societies views in little ways [1.2.(49)]." By "little ways" Pam may be referring to the following:

> I think that if I'm in a position right now I'm in a pretty powerless position. But I think that when I am in a more powerful position that my experiences that, ... I won't forget what I've been through to climb up. So try and use it at this point you're trying to make it to the top. And once you are on top you are in more of a position to help others which is not different then what the whites are doing. Although, they probably don't have to climb the way we have. Kind of coddling your own [1.2.(48)].

Pam's way of living with race reveals how visible minorities do not have the power to be an individual. To be visible means that one can either deny or affirm stereotypes of one's group. Pam realized that she cannot be seen as Canadian and therefore she "chooses" to be an exemplary ethnic.

b) I am one of those

As an adult, Lisa, like Pam associates herself with East Asians. Most of her friends are East Asians. She stated:

> I find that it sounds so stupid but I get along better with my Asian friends than I do with my white friends. And that sounds stupid because it really isn't a matter of race. It's a matter of personality. But I seem to get along better with them. I have more in common with them and I value the same things as them and yet I was raised Canadian [2.1.(9)].

Lisa does not believe in her friends' theory that blood is thicker than water. However, she noted that if it was a matter of socialization she should in fact feel closer to whites than Asians but she no longer does. I would state that Lisa has been socialized by the

wider society to feel more comfortable with Asians. It seemed to bother Lisa that since she is adopted, she is continually noticed as being Asian (by strangers and acquantances) but to her non-Asian friends and family she is treated as being apart from the group Asian. Lisa stated that she is often annoyed with her friends and family's assumptions that it will not affect her if they criticize other Asians (and visible minorities).

> I'm somehow different. You know some people say you know those Asians that always hang out together big gangs but you're different. And besides you're Canadian and you're not really Asian anyways. I got that forever. You're such a banana you're my little banana. [2.1.(19)].

Lisa may be silenced since she is lumped into the group East Asian and also because she is seen as being apart from the group East Asian. Therefore, neither her individuality nor her experiences based on being defined within a group is recognized. In this sense then Lisa is, in her words, "a nobody". For Lisa (and Pam), associating herself closely with Asians may in part be a form of resistance. She is resisting the negative connotations of being East Asian by affirming her identifications as East Asian and being proud of it.

As a child Lisa stated that she was teased a lot for being one of the only or the only East Asian in her neighbourhoods and schools. Some of the other participants also expressed these opinions, however, for Lisa her parents and siblings are also non-Asian. She stated that she started fighting and sticking up for herself from a very early age. However, she does not seem to define these experiences as racism. She believes it was children being children. Therefore, Lisa stated that she has never directly experienced racism. However, her experiences may have inflicted in her an awareness of the possibility of encountering racism. She appears to fully know that she can encounter racism at any time. For Lisa, it is the anticipation of, unpredictability of

and subtlety of racism that has affected her. This fear of the unknown has left her somewhat paranoid.[63] This paranoia is heavily affected by her adoption.

> I just whatever and that's like where I don't really care to know other people's opinions about me. Like I have my friends, I don't need anything else like any new friends or more friends.... But I have my friends I don't need your opinion. You just kinda be wary about me... I guess I'm sort of paranoid cause I'm always scared of what am I going to do.... I'm also wondering what the new person is going to do especially if they hear my name before they meet me. I'm extra paranoid cause I'm afraid that if I call an interviewer for a job. My name is Lisa Jones and they have this idea and I have the qualifications when I walk in. It will be more overt like they would have to say or whatever. But then if my Korean name they could just say on the phone ... I'm scared to deal with it. Like I'd want to be able to say ya I could just punch the guy and walk away but I'm not so sure. Cause I think oh you know I've never encountered it and maybe that's it [2.1.(45)].

Lisa also stated:

> At least if you know this guy is KKK sort of thing you know you can prepare yourself, you can have a comeback for everything now. But if you don't know and he seems really nice and then he'll say something like you know "those kinds". One of my friends actually said that and I hung up on her. She said oh ya you know Asians those kinds. And it prepares you at least you know what you're dealing with if it's overt. If it's all hidden you don't know what to expect you don't know how to

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[63] Pam also discussed being paranoid. After stating that she would define herself as Korean first due to a "visible difference", I asked Pam whether she thought this "visible difference" affected the way people related to her when she was growing up. She states: "No not at all. Not at all. It didn't really hit until probably high school university around that time. I was just more sensitive to it I was more aware of it, paranoid of it paranoid because of it. [5.1.(17)]." When John gets bad service he wonders whether the person is racist or whether he is just paranoid. He also notes that he does not think that most people are aware of their "prejudice and bigotry".

> Do you think they are aware of it... I don't think they think that I'm giving this guy bad service and I'm mad at this guy because he's Asian. Honestly sometimes I think they may treat you differently but I don't really believe that they realize that they are doing it like it's a conscious exercise of prejudice or bigotry. Um I think they are just you know whether they justify it as saying oh I didn't really think about it or something you know... I think that sometimes they just fool themselves like they don't realize how bigoted they are or that they do have prejudice [3.1.(65)].

> react and you just ... either that you don't care or you'll let it slide and they can do it again. It's like saying sure go ahead beat me up some more and I won't do anything [2.1.(21)].

In the first quote Lisa stated, "You just kinda be wary about me". Lisa often mentioned that East Asians are feared. Lisa seemed to find this thought comforting. For example, Lisa stated that in general in her experience she thinks that people in service industries respect her more because "Asians have this reputation of being really rich, lots of money and they are to be feared [2.1.(23)]." Other participants mentioned that East Asians are feared, however, they did not seem to find as much comfort in it as Lisa may. Jenny referred to the way salespersons follow her and watch her more than other shoppers. She stated that she does not know whether it is because she looks young and people associate youth with high risk shoplifters or whether it is because she is Asian. Therefore she said she will not know until she gets older. For Lisa being proud of being Asian or Korean seems to involve a feeling of pride in being feared. Lisa seemed to be saying, "I am one of "those kinds", I'm proud of it, do not discriminate against me or them because I will not allow it."

CONCLUSION

The participants revealed how race intersects with numerous factors, some idiosyncratic and some social. Responses to marginalization varied significantly. All of the participants defined themselves as Canadianized or Westernized and some emphasized their similarity to the dominant society, while others emphasized their difference in relation to the dominant society. The relationship with their ethnicity and race and the significance attached to it also varied.

The participants identified themselves as "different", however, who they defined themselves as different to and the meaning and significance attached to difference varied. The participants defined themselves in relation to the dominant society as "topping or flavour" on "white bread", as "very assimilated Canadian", as

"[racially/culturally] superior", as "not fully Canadian" and "not Caucasian." The participants also defined themselves in relation to their relationship to the ethnic community in Canada, to their country of origin, to representatives of their origins (namely their parents and immigrants) and to other East Asians. They defined themselves as "fencesitter", "not foreign", "not like typical Korean-Canadians", "not like my parents", "Asian", and "Korean". Regardless of how the participants identified themselves, it appears that they all have to deal with the contradictions imbedded in the continual process of negotiating identity and a sense of belonging within a racialized society. Jay (1995) states that his visible minority students:

> ...are accustomed to being seen, and seeing themselves, as having a cultural identity that is "different". While these students never fit into neat boxes and while their personal experiences and senses of identity vary enormously, almost all share a daily consciousness of having to negotiate between their sense of being a person and their sense of belonging to a group. Their person, they feel, is often not identifiable with the symbolic figures that populate the hegemonic culture (p. 123).

Attempts to define who they are seemed to be complicated by how others see them. Therefore, one needs to address what the processes are by which they came to these conclusions and for what purposes. It appears that for all of the participants, to varying degrees, how they defined themselves arises from other peoples expectations. How they defined themselves also changed over time and according to context. The following chapter will attempt to synthesize some of the ways that race has affected the identity of the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions/Reflections

INTRODUCTION

At a recent conference at the University of Alberta, Razack (1997) acknowledged that, "Race is increasingly more and more significant in terms of affecting experience and life chances but we can't talk about it without defining it". In attempting to answer the question: "How does one's visibility as an East Asian affect one's self identity?", I have tried to delineate some aspects of race. In this chapter I aim to summarize and discuss the key findings of the research, reflect on the conceptual framework and methodology, as well as offer suggestions for further research.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

One of the key findings is that it proved to be very difficult to provide generalized information on the participants. The research question is personal and thus, the findings as well cannot be easily generalized to all of the participants. In addition to the original research question, I started asking myself, "How do individual and social factors affect one's perceptions of one's visibility?" An analysis of these factors is beyond the scope of this study. However, it can be stated that factors such as history of family in Canada, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, age and family culture seemed to significantly affect the way the participants see race and themselves as East Asian. These factors may be socially conditioned or restricted, however, the relationship between these factors and race is still specific to the individual. Therefore, in presenting the findings I will specify the participant unless the point is applicable to all participants to some degree.

Differences occurred in how the participants defined racism and how they identified themselves in relation to race. Susan and Lisa thought they had never experienced racism while the other participants thought they had. However, all of the

participants did state that their visibility (being Oriental or Asian) affects them to some degree. Like the majority of Canadians, racism appears to be most directly associated with tangible forms of racism - action and derogatory remarks. For Mark racism does not seem to exist independent of intention. The participants experienced various aspects of racism but they did not define it as racism. For example, Lisa is perpetually worried about other peoples' reactions to the apparent inconsistency between her name and her race. Susan states that she has never experienced racism and rarely thinks about her race, but she is constantly worried about other peoples' perceptions of her as an immigrant or foreigner as not Canadian. Pam stated that she was very sensitive to "negative perceptions". These perceptions have led to feelings of disconnection from the dominant society. Visibility seems to affect their interaction with others and their perceptions of self on a daily basis. However, this is not recognized as racism *per se*. Rather at times the participants seem to feel paranoid, defensive and self conscious. Some participants seem to be insecure and unsure of who they are. In addition, it seemed that the participants did not see racism as both a personal and social issue. Jenny, Alan and Mark appear to see racism primarily as a personal issue. Conversely John noted that he tries not to personalize racism but rather analyzes it as a social issue separate from his life.

All of the participants discussed the discrepancy between how they see themselves and how others see them. However, few recognized that who or what they saw themselves as different and similar to, and the significance of this difference and similarity, is in part an affect of race/racism. None of the participants appeared to be ashamed of being Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese (although they may have been in the past); but they were ashamed of "other Koreans" and "those types of Asians", "their parents" and of "immigrants". Pam, Lisa, Phoung and Susan talked about not wanting to be seen with Asians or Orientals. Therefore, most of the participants are not necessarily ashamed of themselves but they are ashamed of

aspects defined as negative which they realize are associated with them. This association is primarily due to race.

It appears that for the participants, to varying degrees, the categories of "Korean", "Vietnamese", "Japanese", "Chinese", "Canadian" and the hyphenated versions (whether one puts "Canadian" first, i.e. "Canadian-Chinese" or whether one puts one's ethnic origin first, i.e. "Vietnamese-Canadian") does not adequately represent their experiences. For example, Pam defines herself as Korean, however, she also noted that she does not feel like she belongs in either Canada or in Korea. Therefore, it became apparent that exclusion from one category does not necessarily entail inclusion into another category. Also one can easily label oneself according to the categories that are acceptable, however, for visible minorities these categories are often limited to images. One cannot define oneself as Canadian without suspicion due to one's visibility. I would state that the participants seemed to be silenced by their exclusion from the dominant society, their inclusion into an essentialized group, and separation from the group East Asian. When one is continually being noticed as different it is difficult to assert that one is Canadian (beyond citizenship). Likewise, when one is seen as the same, it is difficult to assert one's experiences of being defined as different.

In learning to live with race, all of the participants have thought of ways to manage marginalization. For example, Susan seems to deny that she is marginalized and rather focuses on her similarity to other Canadians. Pam and Lisa tend to affirm their identity as Korean or Asian. However, I would state that the majority of the participants seemed to feel that they could not do anything about racism (if they thought it affected them). Some resisted marginalization by reclaiming a negative difference and transforming it for themselves as a positive difference. They seemed to do so out of necessity. Except for John, a concerted effort to inform oneself on issues of race and identity seemed to be lacking. However, change often comes from necessity. Lisa's refusal to allow persons around her to make derogatory remarks

towards visible minorities, and the "little ways", as Pam stated, can slowly lead to change.

Racism as a social problem may not be of primary concern to the participants. For example, for Phoung, issues of cultural retention and cultural discontinuity between her parents and herself were paramount. However, defining her cultural identity is a complex issue. Hall (1990) states that there are two ways of conceptualizing cultural identity. The first predominantly focuses on reclaiming and rediscovering a hidden, suppressed and oppressed essence. The second is related to the first, however, it also focuses on a continual process of becoming as well as finding what one is (p. 225). Most of the participants, to varying degrees, seem to be involved in discovering their cultural identity by learning about their ethnic culture as well as discovering their relationship to Canadian society.

The generalizability of these findings is not a primary concern. However, I think that considering the broad characteristics of the participants, there is some generalizability value. The participants were from both genders and of various ethnicities, classes and backgrounds.[64] Thus, it would be safe to assume that some of the similarities of the participants' experiences speak to the experience of being raced which transcend boundaries. The differences in their experiences speak equally to the experience of race, but it also reflects the intersection of race with numerous other social and personal factors.

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS/THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

In discussing her travels throughout the United States while making her film, *Fortune Cookies: In Search of Asian America (working title)*, Tajima (1996) states:

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[64] In answering the questions on interracial/interethnic couples, all of the participants referred to the opposite sex. None of the participants stated that they were gay or lesbian, nor was the question asked. However, it would be presumptuous to assume that all of the participants are heterosexual. But considering that this was not explicitly stated, I did not consider homosexuality as a factor in constructing life experiences.

> With all the people I meet during my travels, there is a constant interplay of the particulars of race and history and the universality of death, love, family, dreams that determines the shape of their lives. As if, in striving to assert our singular identity, what we want people to know is that we grieve too (p. 279).

We want people to see us as whole beings, not determined by and/or confined within images and stereotypes. Being Canadian must incorporate the experiences of people whose identity is not indicative of a single nation or culture. Being Canadian is a variety of identities which mix into forms unrecognized and often unrecognizable by the dominant society. The participants cannot be defined within a dichotomy between their level of integration into Canadian society or by their level of ethnic attachment. New theoretical models must appear which take account of these experiences beyond a dialectical framework. Being a visible minority in Canada must go beyond fitting into essentialized cultures. We need to understand group differences as relational and fluid. The myth of authentic and pure individuals and identities must be dispelled. Rather than representing otherness, difference, can mean specificity (see Young, 1990, p. 170).

The interconnections between racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia must be recognized. One of the effects of having closed groups is a piecemeal orientation to socio-economic transformation. Ferguson (1990) states:

> Perhaps it is not too much to hope for a future in which we can recognize differences without seizing them as levers in a struggle for power. But making this future must involve us all. Men cannot dissociate themselves from "women's issues," straight people cannot ignore the struggles of gay and lesbian people, and white people cannot declare themselves indifferent to racial politics. It is too easy for a "sympathetic" self-effacement to become another trick of quiet dominance (p. 13).

Mohanty (1991) posits the existence of an "imagined community" based on political alliances which transcends boundaries of race, class and sex. Alliances within these communities are not based on social identities but on the way one thinks about the

connections between race, class and gender from their own vantage point (p. 4). Audre Lorde (1984) suggests that it is not the differences between us which are separating us, but rather, it is the refusal to recognize and examine these differences. One must examine the ways in which these differences have been distorted as well as the ways in which they affect human behavior and experience (p. 115). While recognizing differences, similarities also must be considered in order to build a sense of community.

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

In reflecting on the methodology for this study, I want to reconsider the issues of equality and the location of the researcher. Upon completion of the first draft of the thesis, I came upon Kirby and McKenna's book, *Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins*. This work seemed to encompass much of what I eventually tried to do. Kirby and McKenna (1989) state:

> The method of researching from the margins involves two interrelated processes which connect the personal and political. First, research from the margins requires intersubjectivity: an authentic dialogue between all participants in the research process in which all are respected as equally knowing subjects. And second, it requires critical reflection. Critical reflection involves an examination of people's social reality... (p. 28).

I respected the participants as "equally knowing subjects", however, I know that in this research we were not equals. The participants may have guided the interviews by their particular responses to questions, however, I was interested in specific knowledge that they had. I may have quoted the participants verbatim, however, I chose which quotes were highlighted, arranged them to my liking and wrote the data presentation and analysis. Although most of the participants have read and approved portions of the presentation and analysis in which they are discussed, I am guessing that approval for some of the participants is a mixture of agreement, apathy and a desire to not complicate the completion of my degree.

My decision to have the participants read portions of the presentation and analysis in which they appeared, is in large part due to the suggestion of my supervisor. However, initially I also thought that having this be a part of the research process would assist me in dealing with my status as an insider researcher and with the topic of race. In the process of conducting the research I thought about the ways in which this work would be validated, ignored and criticized due to my visibility. There is a certain arrogance in academia which deems personal involvement with work subjective as opposed to objective. I think that works on and written by the marginalized often are not taken seriously and are deemed as best suited to an anthology of works on people of similar persuasion. Could this research be perceived as narcissistic, personal healing or god forbid whining?[65] It appears to me that when one adds components of race or gender, or when race is forced upon them, the work becomes questionable, demeaned, and specified as ethnic or racial work to both whites and non-whites. Trinh (1989) recognized that in the literary field:

> Imputing race or sex to the creative act has long been a means by which the literary establishment cheapens and discredits the achievements of non-mainstream women writers. She who "happens to be" a (non-white) Third World member, a woman, and a writer is bound to go through the ordeal of exposing her work to the abuse of praises and criticisms that either ignore, dispense with, or overemphasize her racial and sexual attributes (p. 6).

This appears to be the case in academia as well. When I discuss my work, at times professors and graduate students would kindly remind me that numerous factors affect a person's experiences besides race. I doubt that a white person doing similar research would have had these revealing conversations with fellow students and

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[65] Trinh (1989) cites Mitsuye Yamada, a second generation Asian American who stated that:

> our white sisters...should be able to see that political views held by women of color are often misconstrued as being personal rather than ideological. Views critical to the system held by a person in an "outgroup" are often seen as expressions of personal angers against the dominant society. (If they hate it so much here, why don't they go back?)... (p. 90).

professors. Rather, I think they would have been praised for their sensitive humanitarian efforts. Why would I have to explain that I could understand that identity was composed of numerous factors? Is it the emotional way I discuss race?, is it typical of a conversation where ideas are exchanged?, am I reading too much into these conversations?, or is it part of racism? Perhaps it is a combination of several factors, both idiosyncratic and social. However, if it was a sharing of ideas would it not make more sense to add to the conversation with additional comments or make suggestions, rather than to stop the flow of the conversation to ensure that I knew that race alone does not dictate experiences.

These sorts of conversations added to my apprehensions. It seemed to be that race was simultaneously trendy, suspicious and belittled. Race in Canadian society seems to be the "R" word.[66] Initially I wanted to avoid positioning myself in the research. I wanted my work to appear "objective". I thought if I added my experiences this would discredit my work as not academic enough or not serious work. However, I also knew that my position as an East Asian and a visible minority, was crucial to the research. My experiences would be the backdrop from which the participants experiences would be interpreted. I also knew that I would then be doing what I often criticized other authors of doing, not situating themselves in the work. Kirby and McKenna (1989) state:

> When we engage in research we involve ourselves in a process in which we construct meaning. Because the social world is multifaceted (i.e. the same situation or experience is able to give us many different kinds of knowledge), when we "do research" we involve ourselves in a process of revealing "possible knowledges"... What knowledge we are able to observe and reveal is directly related to our vantage point, to where we stand in the world. Our interaction with the social world is affected by such variables as gender, race, class, sexuality, age, physical ability, etc. This does not mean that facts about the social

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[66] In February of this year, an incident occurred in the House of Commons where a Liberal MP accused a Reform MP of being racist. At a press conference the representative of the Reform MP stated that calling a person racist in a public forum is the legal equivalent to throwing a hand grenade into a room.

> world do not exist, but that what we see and how we go about constructing meaning is a matter of interpretation (p. 25).

My position as an East Asian also may have allowed for a dialogue. I doubt that Pam would have stated that she believed that East Asians will one day rule the world if it was not for the fact that I am East Asian. Perhaps Pam would have done so, but I think the researcher would have had to spend a great deal more time developing rapport. Jenny stated that she does not discuss how she thinks Caucasians are very privileged with her Caucasian friends. Jenny may have eventually discussed her thoughts on white privilege or racism if trust was thoroughly developed. In addition, an outsider researcher may not have been as sympathetic to the internalization of racism. Susan's comments on immigrants and foreigners may have been interpreted as primarily self-hatred.

Knowing that the participants would read what I wrote clearly affected the research process (interviewing and writing). It did not become clear until the analysis had been completed, that this factor greatly assisted me in keeping an eye for context. If it was not for this fact, I may have been more subject to misinterpreting or judging their experiences, thereby transposing my beliefs and experiences onto them. It ensured that I made a clear distinction between the way they saw their statements and the way I saw the same statements. Thus, the fact that I knew that the participants were going to read what I wrote was an incredibly important factor throughout the whole research process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Buchignani (1984) states that a great deal of work has been done on the psychological, cultural and social adaptation processes of Asians into Canadian society. Similar to other ethnic/racial groups, the amount of and focus of these works is generally in relation to the degree with which the groups were associated with mainstream Canadian social problem (p. 3). However, Buchignani (1984) states:

> Other topics involving the relationships between individuals and their interaction with family, community, and society still require a great deal of research. One of these is the need for more theory. While we have a great number of descriptive accounts of what people in various groups maintain from their cultures of origins, a "sociology of cultural maintenance" has not yet evolved beyond the point of noting the range of "outside" constraints which limit the range of possibilities. People's field of choice as it operates within these constraints has been seriously neglected (pp. 9-10).

Buchignani's statement was made more than a decade ago: however, I would state that this recognition is still applicable today. Unlike the United States, which has numerous Asian American Departments, there does not yet appear to be a coherent field of Asian Canadian Studies. This is indicative of the lack of attention paid to visible minorities in Canada in general. Ujimoto and Naidoo (1987 and 1988) state:

> Several events in contemporary Canadian history have reinforced the marginalization of ethnic minorities, the so called "Fourth Solitude", leaving them in a state of limbo, cut off from the other three Solitudes -- the English, Quebec French, and Native Peoples -- embroiled in historic conflicts of power, identity, and territorial claims (p. i).

Certain ethnic groups, however, have received some attention. Work outlining the history of Chinese and Japanese in Canada has been done. In addition, some qualitative research on the experiences of Chinese-Canadians and Japanese-Canadians has also been done.[67] These experiences also have been represented through films, novels and documentaries. However, other East Asian groups such as Koreans and Vietnamese, have received relatively little attention. Much of this has to do with the short history of these groups in Canada. The majority of work on Koreans in Canada comes from the field of psychology. A small number of (published) studies exist on the history of Koreans in Toronto (see Kim and Berry, 1985) and Lower mainland British Columbia (see Lehmann and Lee, 1986) which are primarily descriptive. In

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[67] See Ujimoto and Naidoo (1984, 1986 and 1987 and 1988) for works on Chinese-Canadians. For a good list of references on the Japanese-Canadian experience see the reference list of Kobayashi (1987 and 1988).

the Korean-Canadian case, the majority of Koreans came in the mid 1970's. In the near future it will become increasingly difficult to interview the first generation of Koreans in Canada. Work which focuses on qualitative interviews, as done by Henry (1994) on the Caribbean identities in Toronto, or by The Women's Book Committee and the Chinese Canadian National Council (1992) on Chinese Canadian women, would be highly beneficial. There has been some historical work on the Vietnamese in Canada (see Buchignani, 1984). This work must go beyond being descriptive, focusing on quantitative indicators of integration (income levels, economic status, language retention etc.), but on the relationship between the minority cultures and Canadian society and from the Korean and Vietnamese points of view. Attention needs to be paid to both the ethnic cultural background (thus works on the nation they originally came from) as well as the particular histories and experiences of these groups in Canada. Also, these works cannot ignore differential power relations between the dominant society and the minority cultures and within or across minority cultures.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to address experiences which are not present in the wider society. This impetus arose out of my own experiences where I thought that public discussion of multiculturalism, immigration, ethnicity, race and racism often did not address many of the experiences I have had and do have. There is a gross misunderstanding of race and racism in the wider society (and thus also amongst minority groups). It seems that many locate racism in more tangible forms of discrimination, however, most of racism is subtle to varying degrees. I also wanted to add East Asians into race discourse in Canada by trying to explain the stereotypes as stereotypes. This would not be so significant if it was not for the presence of the white racial hierarchy. To say that East Asians are a privileged minority is in part true in terms of access to rewards. However, the experiences of being a privileged

minority with "positive" stereotypes is silencing. Like other visible minority groups, East Asians suffer from racism. By design, stereotypes of East Asians serve the white racial hierarchy - they, like others, make up the "tools of oppressions".

In discussing these experiences I also wanted to add to ideas of what it means to be Canadian. In representing these experiences I knew from the onset that there was no one specific experience that could be easily defined. I tried to see myself and the other participants as all having socially constructed experiences which lead to specific knowledge. I did not think that I could adequately represent the participants in their complexity but what I have tried to do is keep an eye on context. Experiencing the participants, for me, was an eye opening process in discovering the complexity of what it means to be raced, specifically as East Asian.

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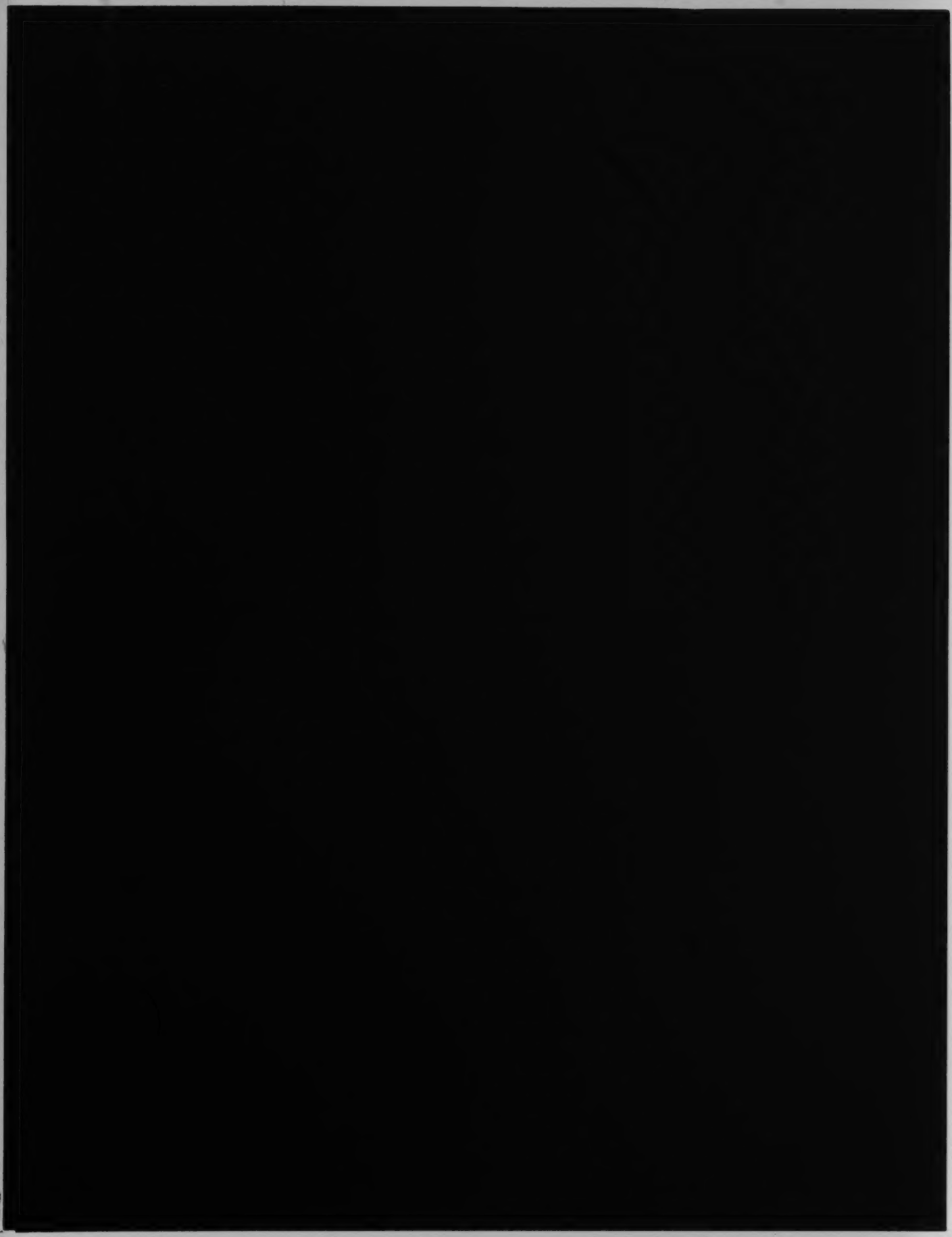
Appendix A: Consent Form

November 9, 1996

I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta and I am conducting research for my Master's degree. I plan to interview people from ethnic minority groups to get their perspectives on particular issues of identity development.

In the course of this research I plan on interviewing each individual at least twice. I will assure confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms. At no time will the identity of any individual be disclosed unless that individual specifically requests that I do so. Before the final printing I will have participants verify the information that I have written.

Please understand that if you agree to take part in this research that you have the right to opt-out at any time during the course of the study. With your permission I will audio-tape interviews. There may be times when I will employ a professional to transcribe the interviews. This individual will have to sign a confidentiality form. Following the study all field notes will be destroyed and audio-tapes will be erased.

I agree to all of the above conditions.

Hijin Park (Student) _____ Signature _____